

Lifelong Learning

Children, Education and Home
Affairs Scrutiny Panel

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Chair's Foreword

When the Panel began this review in December 2025, we wanted to understand how well Jersey supports people to learn, grow, and develop skills throughout their lives. Lifelong vocational learning should open doors at every stage, whether someone is beginning their career, returning to work, or looking to retrain in a completely new direction. What we found is that while there is good work happening across the Island, the overall system is not yet delivering on the promise of “lifelong” learning for everyone.

A key observation from this review is that opportunities for adults are still too limited. Many Islanders who want to reskill, upskill, or change career face barriers that make it difficult to take that next step. The lifelong learning offer feels disjointed, with gaps in progression routes and a lack of flexible options designed around adult learners’ responsibilities.

We also heard repeatedly that awareness of opportunities is low. Learners, parents, young people and even employers told us that information is scattered, unclear, or simply not visible enough. Without a clear picture of what is available, too many people are missing out on opportunities to engage in lifelong vocational learning.

We heard that Highlands College plays a vital role in Jersey’s vocational landscape, but its current campus is no longer fit for the Island’s future needs. The outdated estate limits the ability to modernise courses, expand provision, and deliver the industry standard environments that today’s learners and employers expect. Accessibility also emerged as a significant concern, particularly for high needs learners. Young people with additional needs often struggle to access the support they require and the lack of financial support for some groups means that practical barriers become challenging. If lifelong learning is to be truly inclusive, these gaps must be addressed.

Finally, we found that vocational options for young people within the school curriculum are uneven and dependent on capacity. Some pupils have strong access to practical, vocational pathways, while others have very limited opportunities. This inconsistency not only affects fairness but also contributes to the ongoing cultural stigma surrounding vocational pathways.

Despite these challenges, the Panel was encouraged by the passion and commitment shown by providers, employers, and learners themselves. There is a strong foundation to build on, and a clear desire from all sides to strengthen Jersey’s vocational learning system. Through the course of the review, the Panel has identified an appetite for a culture change; to promote a culture where vocational learning is valued and the division between academic and vocational pathways is closed. The Panel wants to see a culture which actively promotes learning across the lifespan. By engaging an expert adviser, Professor Ellen Boeren, the Panel learnt about different initiatives in other jurisdictions and is encouraged by the progress made in promoting vocational learning globally.

This review comes at an important moment. With rapid technological change, automation and a changing labour market, the Island’s ability to support lifelong learning will be critical to our economic resilience and social wellbeing. We hope that this report provides a constructive path forward, and that the recommendations help create a system for learning that is accessible, modern, and genuinely lifelong.



Deputy Catherine Curtis
Chair, Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Executive Summary

Lifelong vocational learning refers to the continuous acquisition of skills and knowledge throughout an individual's life. The Panel focused specifically on vocational contexts, including apprenticeships, technical qualifications, professional retraining, and short courses that support employability and skills development across all stages of life.

In examining the state of lifelong vocational learning in Jersey, the Panel identified the need for a coordinated, future facing strategy that balances the needs of learners, employers, providers, and Government. While lifelong vocational learning delivers significant social and economic benefits, the Panel found that Jersey's current system presents substantial barriers to access, lacks cohesion across providers, and does not fully support the Island's future skills needs.

Strengths of the Current System

Jersey's vocational learning landscape has several notable strengths. Highlands College continues to play a central role, offering a broad range of vocational programmes with generally strong outcomes, particularly at Levels 2 and 3. Provision at these levels is well-established and serves school leavers effectively, with employers reporting positive engagement and clear alignment with sector needs. Alongside Highlands College, a number of private training providers contribute specialist expertise and greater flexibility in delivery, enabling more tailored learning options for both individuals and businesses. Collectively, these elements mean that early career vocational pathways are functioning relatively well and provide a solid foundation on which to build and serves school leavers effectively, with employers reporting positive engagement and clear alignment with sector needs.

Weaknesses of the Current System

Despite these strengths, the system faces significant structural and operational weaknesses. Jersey lacks modern vocational training infrastructure: the Highlands campus is outdated, and there is no centralised physical hub that brings together learners, employers, and providers. At a system level, the provision is highly fragmented, with more than a dozen institutions involved and limited coordination between them. This fragmentation results in inconsistent or unclear progression pathways and, more broadly, the absence of a coherent strategic framework.

Awareness of vocational opportunities is also low; engagement with groups such as the Jersey Youth Assembly highlighted gaps in visibility and persistent cultural stigma surrounding vocational routes. Funding arrangements present further challenges, with unclear rules and restrictions that prevent degree holders from retraining in essential fields, such as teachers seeking to become social workers. Employers, particularly small and medium sized businesses, face barriers to participation in training due to limited support, and some schemes, such as Better Business packages, exclude sole traders entirely. Additionally, the system is not yet positioned to meet future skills needs in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), green technology, and digital transformation. Increasing automation is also reducing the demand for entry-level administrative roles, highlighting the importance of developing a flexible workforce with strong transferable skills. In addition, some groups, particularly those in small and medium-sized businesses, face barriers to accessing training due to limited support, and certain schemes restrict qualification-holders from retraining in essential fields.

Barriers to Access

Learners encounter a range of financial, structural, and cultural barriers that limit their ability to engage in lifelong vocational learning. These barriers disproportionately affect particular groups, including

disabled and neurodivergent people, women, mature learners, and those with caring responsibilities. The current system is largely geared towards school leavers, leaving mid-career and adult learners without sufficient pathways or support; in many cases, a “Level 3 ceiling” prevents learners from progressing further. Financial barriers remain significant, with limited funding options for those seeking to retrain or upskill later in life. Information gaps also play a major role: signposting of opportunities is inconsistent, and stigma around vocational learning continues to deter individuals who might otherwise benefit. Collectively, these barriers hinder accessibility and run counter to the principle that learning should be available at all stages of life.

Comparison with Best Practice

International and UK models demonstrate the benefits of clearer progression pathways, strong employer partnerships, modern training infrastructure, and integrated funding systems. Jersey’s system does not yet align with these characteristics and would benefit from a more coordinated, long-term vocational learning strategy.

What Next?

The nature of work and vocational learning is changing rapidly. To remain competitive and resilient, the Panel believes that Jersey will need to prioritise:

- Development of a modern, flexible lifelong vocational learning system that supports people throughout their careers.
- Development of labour market intelligence to identify clear skills priorities for the future, particularly in digital, green, and building transferable skills.
- Greater signposting, awareness and visibility of vocational learning opportunities.

Findings and Recommendations

As part of this review, the Panel has identified 33 findings and put forward 20 recommendations.

Finding 1: Highlands College remains the primary hub for vocational learning, delivering around 90% of provision. Apprenticeships span sectors such as construction, hospitality, early years, engineering, and hairdressing.

Finding 2: Private sector training exists but is fragmented and largely led by individual organisations. Provision is uneven across sectors and lacks a coherent ecosystem.

Finding 3: There is no central information point for apprenticeships and vocational opportunities. Learners and employers cannot easily see the full range of options across public and private providers.

Finding 4: Apprenticeship participation varies significantly by sector. Some pathways are growing while others are in decline, indicating misalignment between provision and labour-market demand.

Finding 5: Care apprenticeships have declined despite rising workforce needs, but no research has isolated the causes.

Finding 6: The Government of Jersey holds quantitative data on apprenticeships but lacks qualitative insight into motivations and barriers for learners and providers.

Finding 7: Jersey is highly exposed to UK qualification reforms due to curricular and awarding-body alignment. Changes to Level 3 pathways directly affect local continuity, choice, and suitability of vocational pathways. The withdrawal of BTECs risks narrowing choice and flexibility for learners. Even gradual phase-out in England undermines the support system (awarding bodies, resources, training) that Jersey relies on.

Finding 8: Key details about V Levels remain unclear. If they mirror T Levels, they may be unsuitable for Jersey given extensive placement demands. T Level style placement requirements are impractical in a small jurisdiction.

Finding 9: The Panel found that vocational learning opportunities are available to 14- to 16-year-olds from only two secondary schools, due to the capacity issues at Highlands College.

Finding 10: Stakeholder experiences indicate that accessibility challenges are not fully reflected in official monitoring. Lived experiences highlight persistent barriers despite assurances of increasing inclusivity.

Finding 11: Adult participation in apprenticeships is strong, but gender imbalance is pronounced. Around three-quarters of apprentices are male, contrasting with more gender balanced sixth-form participation.

Finding 12: Neurodivergent learners face environmental, structural, and support-related barriers. Access, adjustments, and continuity of support remain inconsistent across settings.

Finding 13: Adult learners, especially mid-career and women, face significant cost and flexibility barriers. Limited part-time and modular options and income constraints inhibit participation and progression.

Finding 14: Financial barriers remain significant due to upfront fees, lost earnings, and limited support for retraining and career changers. These pressures disproportionately affect adults seeking to re-enter or pivot within the labour market.

Finding 15: Adult education programmes at Highlands show high completion and attainment. Where learners enrol, outcomes are generally positive, indicating good delivery quality.

Finding 16: Routes for reskilling and career-changes are limited outside core sectors. Entry-level pathways are clearer in construction, hospitality, hair and beauty, and health and social care than in other fields.

Finding 17: Private providers meet recognised standards but face resourcing challenges. Operating without subsidies or structured support constrains sustainability and growth.

Finding 18: Employer engagement is distributed across multiple bodies rather than centrally coordinated. This diffuses data gathering and can delay coherent system-level responses.

Finding 19: Direct financial support for employer-led training is limited beyond apprenticeships. Existing schemes tend to fund programmes rather than employer-specific upskilling.

Finding 20: Vocational routes at Levels 2–3 for young entrants are well established and perform strongly. These pathways are a reliable entry point into work.

Finding 21: Progression beyond Level 3 is often unclear, with gaps at higher technical and degree levels. Limited local pathways constrain advanced skills development.

Finding 22: The skills element of the Better Business Support Package under-performed under a 50:50 match model. The programme ends on 31 December 2026, prompting the need for redesign to improve uptake.

Finding 23: Eligibility for the Better Business Support Package lacks clarity among stakeholders.

Finding 24: Sole traders without staff are excluded from the Better Business Support Package due to wage-linked criteria. No support exists for sole-person businesses to hire their first employee, apprentice, or trainee. This creates a structural barrier to expanding training capacity in the economy and passing on skills in more niche sectors.

Finding 25: The Highlands College estate is outdated and constrains industry-standard delivery. Facilities limit access to modern equipment and limit the range of courses. The estate presents significant barriers for accessibility and inclusivity.

Finding 26: The absence of a shared lifelong-learning hub reduces coordination and visibility. A central hub could enable collaboration, signposting, and economies of scale.

Finding 27: Funding rules are complex and difficult to navigate. Ambiguity around eligibility, pathways, and exceptions causes confusion for parents, learners, employers, and providers.

Finding 28: Restrictions on second-degree funding limit adult retraining even in shortage areas. This caps workforce mobility and slows responses to emerging needs.

Finding 29: Skills forecasting is limited and inconsistent across sectors. Without a stronger evidence base, policy and commissioning risk lagging market shifts.

Finding 30: The economy's volatility reinforces the need for transferable, adaptable skills. Future-proofing skills will help individuals transition across roles and sectors.

Finding 31: Learners and employers face comparatively high costs with no statutory entitlements. This reduces participation and makes provider planning more precarious.

Finding 32: Vocational routes remain culturally undervalued relative to academic pathways. Perceptions hinder uptake and recruitment, unlike in countries where vocational education is valued highly.

Finding 33: Provision is not sufficiently aligned to emerging skills (digital, regulatory, sustainability, AI). A coordinated, data-driven labour-market intelligence approach is needed to close widening skills gaps.

Recommendation 1: Skills Jersey, supported by CYPES , should establish and maintain a single online public portal for vocational learning, providing up-to-date information on apprenticeships, courses, providers, subsidies and trainee opportunities with clear guidance for learners, employers and providers, achieving at least 90% coverage of provision and 75% user satisfaction with a searchable catalogue, with filters, launching by Q4 2026, with quarterly updates thereafter.

Recommendation 2: CYPES and Skills Jersey should deliver a communications and culture change campaign that promotes vocational routes and lifelong learning through case studies, events and school/employer outreach, achieving at least two campaign waves per year, a 15% awareness uplift (pre/post survey), 20 employer champions and 10 school events per term, with the strategy approved by Q3 2026, the first wave delivered by Q3 2026 and annual reviews thereafter.

Recommendation 3: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development should commission Skills Jersey to conduct targeted research into apprenticeship experiences, including motivations and barriers across sectors and a deep-dive into care and other priority sectors, publishing a report with sector-specific actions and at least 200 respondents by Q4 2026 and implementing an agreed action plan from Q1 2027 (commissioned by Q3 2026).

Recommendation 4: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should publish an assessment of UK qualification reforms (V and T-Levels) and BTEC viability, setting deliverable routes for Jersey and issuing a public timeline with mitigations, evidenced by a subject-level route map, a communications pack for parents, learners and employers, with a draft by Q3 2026 and publication by Q4 2026.

Recommendation 5: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should establish a provider transition support plan and fund to resource Highlands, Hautlieu and other providers for curriculum changes, CPD, materials, timetable redesign and student support, achieving 90% staff training in affected subjects, with the plan agreed by Q3 2026, funding live by Q4 2026 and termly reviews.

Recommendation 6: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should, by the end of Q4 2026 complete a comprehensive assessment of Highlands College's current capacity to deliver vocational learning to 14- to 16-year-olds across all secondary schools. The Minister should develop a plan by Q1 2027 to expand vocational learning opportunities to all secondary schools by September 2027 to ensure fair and equitable access for all students.

Recommendation 7: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, working with providers and inclusion leads, should publish an all-age accessibility and inclusion strategy for vocational learning that strengthens transition support, flexible/part-time options, recognition of prior learning and additional needs pathways, drafting by Q3 2026 and implementing from Q1 2027.

Recommendation 8: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, in partnership with Skills Jersey, providers and employers, should introduce a gender balance action plan using mentoring, bursaries and role model campaigns to address subject and sector imbalances, reducing gender imbalance by at least 10% in four priority programmes within 24 months, with the plan agreed by Q3 2026, launched by Q4 2026 and evaluated annually.

Recommendation 9: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should launch a modular, stackable and blended adult career-changer programme with guidance and recognition of prior learning for mid-career transitions, delivering at least 5 new modular offers, 100 adult enrolments in year one, with design completed by Q3 2026 and first intakes by Q1 2027.

Recommendation 10: The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development should review and reform apprenticeship subsidy structures, including subsidy levels, eligibility and duration, to prioritise workforce shortage sectors, adopting new rules and increasing starts in shortage sectors by at least 15% within 12 months while maintaining employer satisfaction at or above 75%, following a review in Q3 2026 and implementation in Q4 2026.

Recommendation 11: Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and Skills Jersey should define priority sectors and skills and adjust local vocational pathways, accordingly, approving a priority list by Q3 2026 and protecting or expanding at least five pathways by Q1 2027, with an annual alignment check thereafter.

Recommendation 12: CYPES and Skills Jersey should mandate standardised data returns from all learners and all providers (including private) into a single database covering participation, demographics, progression and outcomes, achieving 90% provider compliance with quarterly public dashboards and embedded gap reporting, with the framework in place by Q3 2026 and the first dashboard by Q4 2026.

Recommendation 13: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, should simplify and consolidate lifelong learning funding into a single, clear set of eligibility rules and entitlements supported by a public guide and calculator, completing policy consolidation and publishing guidance to achieve an 80% user satisfaction rate, following consultation in Q3 2026 and live in Q4 2026.

Recommendation 14: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development should establish a sustainable funding model for private providers delivering apprenticeships and training in shortage sectors, agreeing a new model that secures at least 80% provider confidence and prevents any net loss of places in shortage areas, with review in Q3 2026 and implementation in Q1 2027.

Recommendation 15: The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, should assess and redesign the Better Business Support Package skills element to align with employer needs, allow multi-activity applications, increase subsidies where justified, include sole traders and first hires, and embed monitoring and evaluation, publishing an assessment and new KPIs and achieving at least 20% more funded training actions and a minimum of 15% more first-hire/trainee/apprentice cases, with assessment in Q3 2026, redesign in Q4 2026 and relaunch in Q1 2027 if results aren't achieved.

Recommendation 16: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, should commission a feasibility study and masterplan for a modern Highlands College campus as a lifelong learning

hub with industry standard facilities, producing costed options and securing industry validation across at least six sectors by Q4 2026 and a preferred option decision by Q2 2027.

Recommendation 17: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should, by December 2026, undertake a comprehensive review and redesign of funding arrangements for lifelong learning, post-16 education, and higher-education retraining. The redesigned model should:

- Simplify and consolidate existing funding systems to ensure that eligibility criteria and entitlements are clear, consistent, and easy for learners and providers to understand.
- Remove barriers that currently prevent newly arrived families from accessing funded post-16 education, ensuring fair and equitable access for all residents.
- Introduce a retraining and upskilling funding pathway that enables individuals who already hold a degree to access support for study in priority workforce areas such as social work and other critical sectors.

The Minister should publish the reviewed policy framework, including implementation timelines and measurable success indicators, by Q1 2027.

Recommendation 18: The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, Skills Jersey and Statistics Jersey should establish a permanent Labour Market Intelligence function to produce regular skills forecasts and publish accessible insights for learners, providers and employers, issuing an annual island-wide skills report operational by Q3 2026 with the first annual report by Q4 2026.

Recommendation 19: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, should introduce a formal annual Skills Policy review cycle that incorporates Labour Market Intelligence, technological change and employer feedback with the first review completed by Q1 2027 and annually thereafter.

Recommendation 20: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should establish statutory entitlements for post-16 and adult vocational learning underpinned by a dedicated, ring-fenced fund and operating the fund to achieve over 10% year-on-year uptake growth in priority sectors, with policy design by Q3 2026 and enactment/launch by Q3 2027.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the review

On 3 December 2025 the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel (hereafter, the 'Panel') launched a review of the lifelong vocational learning opportunities currently on offer in Jersey.

What is meant by 'lifelong learning'?

Lifelong learning is a concept that originated from UNESCO's 1972 publication *Learning to Be*¹. The term is often used as an umbrella concept and therefore carries a range of broad and varying definitions. One of the most widely accepted definitions is provided by the European Commission (2000), which defines lifelong learning as:

¹ International Commission on the Development of Education (1972), *Learning to be: the world of education today and tomorrow*, available at unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000001801 (accessed 30 January 2026)

“All purposeful learning activity undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social and/ or employment-related perspective.”²

The Panel chose to concentrate specifically on the employment-related dimension of lifelong learning and therefore adopts the term *lifelong vocational learning* to reflect this focus. Lifelong vocational learning, in this context, encompasses forms of learning such as apprenticeships, traineeships, upskilling, reskilling, career-changing, continued professional development, and other forms of work-based or industry recognised learning such as micro-credentials, on-the-job training, and certification programmes.

Purpose and scope of the review

The purpose of this review is to establish the current opportunities for lifelong vocational learning in Jersey. The scope of this review includes consideration of the provision and accessibility of further education; the structure, uptake and outcomes of apprenticeship programmes; and the role of adult education in supporting career changes and upskilling the local workforce. This review aims to examine those opportunities for lifelong vocational learning, including assessment of their effectiveness, accessibility, inclusivity and how they compare to best practice in this area.

The Panel agreed to maintain a focus on lifelong vocational learning throughout the review; therefore, the following topics were considered to be outside of the scope of the review:

- Higher Education, including higher education curriculum.
- University degrees, including student finance and remote learning.
- Community lifelong learning, including formal and non-formal, community-based learning organisations.
- Informal, or non-formal learning that is not related directly to a vocational or professional development pathway.
- School-age and Early Years education.

While the Panel recognises that the above topics are important aspects of the wider lifelong learning framework, the Panel decided to maintain focus on lifelong vocational learning due to the limited timeframe for the review. The Panel decided on this area of focus because they identified vocational learning, and in particular, apprenticeships, to be a significant topic.

1.2 Methodology and evidence base (hearings, submissions, comparative research)

This report aims to establish the current provision of lifelong vocational learning in Jersey. The Panel used several methods to gather the evidence that has informed this report and has combined qualitative evidence from stakeholder submissions and public hearings with quantitative data where this is available.

The Panel gathered its primary evidence from public hearings, targeted stakeholder letters and public submissions. Desktop research has been undertaken, and a list of reports, academic literature, legislation and policy is referenced in a bibliography at the end of this report.

² European Commission. (2000). *A memorandum on lifelong learning*. Luxembourg: European Commission, available at: https://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/1/3090/1/Integrating%20lifelong%20learning%20perspectives_UNESCO2002.pdf#page=63 (accessed on 22 January 2026).

The Panel held a Public Hearing with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development on 07 January 2026. The Panel held a Public Hearing with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and the Principal of Highlands College on 08 January 2026. The transcripts for the public review hearings can be viewed [here](#).

The Panel engaged with the Jersey Youth Assembly (JYA) during this review. A meeting with the JYA was held on 19 January 2025 to seek members of the JYA's feedback on particular aspects of lifelong vocational learning. The notes from the meeting can be found [here](#).

To support the Review, the Panel agreed that an Expert Adviser should be appointed to provide specialist, evidence-based input. Following a structured shortlisting and interview process, Professor Ellen Boeren was selected for this role. Her appointment reflected her strong academic background in adult education and lifelong learning, alongside extensive experience collaborating with major international organisations, including the OECD, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, and the European Commission. In accordance with the adviser engagement brief, Professor Boeren was tasked with delivering two core strands of work: (1) providing an overview of the current provision of lifelong vocational learning in Jersey, and (2) undertaking a comparative analysis of lifelong vocational learning policies and apprenticeship systems across similar jurisdictions to identify examples of best practice.

Professor Boeren's contribution centred on synthesising the key challenges facing vocational lifelong learning in Jersey and interpreting these issues through her broader expertise in the field. She used this analysis to highlight areas where additional research, policy development, and potential reform could be informed by international examples and comparative evidence. Her findings informed the Panel's understanding of international approaches and contextualised Jersey's position within broader vocational learning frameworks. The full Expert Advisor's Report is appended at the end of this document.

The scope of the Review was constrained by the limited timeframe available due to the pre-election period. In order to publish the report ahead of the final meeting of the current States Assembly on 24 March 2026, the Panel agreed to narrow its focus to lifelong learning provision of a vocational nature. This decision ensured that the Review could be completed within the deadline to request a ministerial response before the election period, while still providing meaningful analysis and recommendations.

1.3 Context: Jersey's education and skills landscape

Lifelong learning is recognised as a priority within Jersey's education and economic strategy, reflecting workforce needs and demographic changes. There has been concern raised by Islanders regarding a 'brain drain' in Jersey, with many graduates reportedly leaving the Island, contributing to persistent staffing and recruitment shortages across sectors.³ As outlined in the Budget 2025–2028, the Island is seeking to promote sustainable industries and build economic resilience through targeted investment in skills development, digital training, and vocational pathways.⁴

Highlands College is the only Further and Higher Education College in Jersey, offering apprenticeships, professional development courses, and access to higher education. In a letter to the Panel dated 20 June 2025, the Principal highlighted challenges with the estate, prompting renewed scrutiny of the infrastructure supporting lifelong learning in Jersey.⁵ The Principal stated that 'the current Highlands College estate is outdated, inflexible, and no longer fit for purpose in many areas.'⁶

³ [Jersey Children and Young People's Survey Report 2024](#), Statistics Jersey, 26 March 2024, p.48

⁴ [Budget \(Government Plan\) 2025 to 2028](#), Government of Jersey, December 2024, p.45

⁵ [Letter from Highlands College to the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 20 June 2025](#)

⁶ [Letter from Highlands College to the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 20 June 2025](#)

In light of this context, the Panel agreed that it would like to conduct a review on this topic area, to provide a snapshot of the lifelong vocational learning opportunities currently on offer in Jersey.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

The role of Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning in Jersey was formally established in February 2024, as part of a restructuring of ministerial responsibilities under the new Council of Ministers.⁷ The role was created in response to growing recognition that education policy needed to better reflect the full spectrum of learning, from early childhood through to adult education and workforce development.

The Common Strategic Policy 2024-2026

The Government's Common Strategic Policy 2024 -2026 committed to 'increase the provision of lifelong learning and skills development.'⁸ In the Common Strategic Policy 2024-2026, the Government outlined a commitment to prioritise the delivery of skills development, which would include promoting apprenticeships. The Government pledged to increasing the provision of lifelong learning and skills delivery to ensure they develop the future workforce the Island requires.

The Budget (Government Plan) 2025-2028

To support the Common Strategic Priority of 'Investing in Lifelong Learning & Future Skills Provision', the Budget (Government Plan) 2025-2028 committed to:

- Increasing the provision of lifelong learning, with a focus on vocational training, adult education, and digital skills.
- Expanding access to flexible learning options, including distance learning and modular qualifications, to support career transitions and personal development⁹.

The Budget 2025–2028 also highlighted lifelong learning as a driver of the Island's economic resilience and social equity. The 2025 Budget outlined a 5.7% increase in revenue expenditure, with targeted investment in education and skills. Specific allocations include:

- Continued funding for Skills Jersey, which provides career guidance, apprenticeships, and adult learning programmes.
- Support for Highlands College to modernise facilities and expand vocational offerings.
- Investment in digital infrastructure and training to ensure Islanders can access online learning and upskill in emerging sectors.

Furthermore, in the '2025 Business Plan - Children, Young People, Education & Skills' the Department committed to expanding lifelong learning and skills development, recognising it as "*integral to the future economic prosperity of the Island*."¹⁰ The Department's priorities include promoting apprenticeships and a series of targeted development schemes.

In summary, there has been growing attention on lifelong vocational learning in Jersey, particularly within wider conversations about education, skills development, and preparing the workforce for the future. In this context, the Panel chose to undertake a review of the Island's lifelong vocational learning provision, with the aim of producing a clear 'snapshot' of its current state.

⁷ [Changes to Ministerial Offices \(Jersey\) Amendment Order 2024](#)

⁸ [Common Strategic Policy 2024-2026](#), Government of Jersey, May 2024

⁹ [Budget \(Government Plan\) 2025 to 2028](#), Government of Jersey, December 2024

¹⁰ [2025 Business Plan – Children, Young People, Education & Skills](#), Government of Jersey, p.3

2. Current Opportunities for Lifelong Vocational Learning

2.1 Provision and Accessibility of Further Education

Role of Highlands College and other providers

The opportunities for lifelong vocational learning in Jersey are provided by Highlands College and University College Jersey and a number of private providers. The Panel found that Highlands College is the main provider of lifelong vocational learning opportunities in Jersey, as they deliver '90% of vocational and technical learning on the island'.¹¹ The Panel understands that Highlands College offers apprenticeship courses to apprentices employed in the following sectors:

- Construction;
- Culinary arts and Hospitality studies;
- Early Years;
- Engineering; and
- Hairdressing.¹²

Through the course of the review, the Panel identified a number of private sector providers of lifelong vocational learning opportunities in Jersey. The Panel found opportunities for training courses offered by external providers, including The Chartered Management Institute ('CMI'), Dental Nursing, Hairdressing (offered by NEON Salon and School), and Health and Social Care (Regulated Qualifications Framework 'RQF')¹³. In addition, desktop research undertaken during the Review indicated that trainee roles were available across a range of sectors, including finance, banking, agriculture, retail, construction, automotive, and law.

The Panel sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities available on-island for training and apprenticeships across different sectors. During the course of the review, however, the Panel identified the absence of a central information point and a lack of clear communication regarding the apprenticeships and trainee roles available across sectors. To mitigate this, the Panel issued social media requests inviting members of the public with experience of apprenticeships to provide 'case study' style submissions to the Review, in addition to the letters written directly to stakeholders.

On 19 December 2025, the Panel wrote to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning requesting data on the number of apprenticeship programmes available and the sectors in which they operate. The Minister responded on 9th January 2026, providing a table showing the number of apprentices in receipt of the apprenticeship subsidy by sector and year, covering the period from 2020/21 to 2024/25.

¹¹ [Written Submission, Highlands College and University College Jersey](#), 14 January 2026

¹² [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel](#), 09 January 2026

¹³ [Apprenticeship Grants – Better Business Grant](#), Jersey Business

Number of apprentices in receipt of apprentice subsidy by sector and year

Sector	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Beauty Therapy	<5	<5	<5	8	<5
Bricklaying	<5	8	<5	<5	<5
Carpentry	55	69	47	75	63
Childcare	24	36	50	43	43
Civil Engineering	10	9	10	8	8
CMI management	25	15	18	16	15
Construction and the Built Environment	<5	<5	5	<5	<5
Construction Management	<5	<5	7	<5	20
Culinary arts	5	7	15	13	14
Dental nursing	5	8	9	<5	<5
Digital	15	10	<5	<5	<5
Electrical Installation	82	127	136	138	125
Greenkeeping	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Hair Dressing	25	28	23	18	19
Horticulture	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Care	23	24	14	15	<5
Light Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Principles	23	26	42	32	37
Painting and Decorating	8	9	8	5	<5
Play work	36	9	8	<5	<5
Plumbing	24	36	49	43	42
Retail	<5	10	11	<5	9
Veterinary Nursing Small Animal Practice	9	<5	<5	<5	<5
Welding and Fabrication Practice	15	14	17	15	19
Youth Work	<5	<5	<5	8	8

[Table

1]¹⁴

Analysis of the apprenticeship subsidy data from 2020/21 to 2024/25 reveals several notable trends. Electrical Installation consistently recorded the highest number of apprentices, peaking at 138 in 2023/24 and remaining strong at 125 in 2024/25. Both Childcare and Light Vehicle Maintenance and Repair demonstrated steady growth, with 43 and 37 apprentices respectively in 2024/25. In contrast, sectors such as Digital, Play Work, and Hairdressing experienced marked declines over the period, with Digital falling from 15 in 2020/21 to fewer than five in 2024/25. Some courses recorded consistently low numbers across the period, such as Horticulture and Greenkeeping, which did not reach over 5 apprentices enrolled in any year. The data shows with some courses having fewer than 5 apprentices enrolled in 2024/25. These included Beauty Therapy, Bricklaying, Construction and the Built Environment, Dental Nursing, Digital, Horticulture, Painting and Decorating, and Play Work.

Notably, the table shows that apprenticeships in the Care sector declined steadily from 24 in 2021/22 to 14 in 2022/23, before falling further to fewer than five in 2024/25. During the Panel's public hearing with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, the Minister commented on the decline in apprentices in the care sector and stated:

*"Care, though, I would say is one area which is possibly concerning. We had less than 5 apprentices in 2024-25. We had 15 in 2023-24, 14 in 2022-23. Care is obviously an area that we know is going to be in greater demand. I would hope that that is a one-year blip, but it remains to be seen."*¹⁵

¹⁴ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 09 January 2026](#)

¹⁵ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p.2

Following this, the Panel sought clarification on why the Minister considered the decline in care apprentices to be ‘concerning’ and posed the following question:

“Deputy M. Tadier: I was just going to ask why you think it is a concern that there are so few apprentices in certain areas, like care.

The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development: Care is a particular one that stands out to us because we know that there is going to be greater demand for care in the next 20 years.”¹⁶

Furthermore, the Panel had a discussion with the Minister regarding the factors which could have influenced the decline in apprentices in the care sector. During the Hearing, the Panel and the Minister identified four potential contributing factors. These included: the relaxation of the work permit policy allowing more carers from overseas; the possibility that the sector is currently sufficiently staffed; the care sector being less attractive to prospective workers; and a lack of incentives for employers to take on apprentices. Following this, the Minister concluded:

The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development: “When you look at that figure, at least 10 fewer apprentices this year in care. It could be because it is healthily staffed, as I was saying to Deputy Tadier. It could be because it is just easier to bring in people on a work permit with their qualifications intact ready to go. Or it could be that the care sector is less attractive and people do not want to go into that sector. Equally it could be that the incentives are not enough for employers to take on the apprenticeships. There are, in this brief discussion, 4 different reasons and only research will tell.”¹⁷

This discussion is significant because it highlighted the Minister’s concern about the decline in care apprentices, while also demonstrating that this reduction may stem from at least four different factors.¹⁸ This suggests that although the Minister is aware of changing trends in apprenticeship uptake, there is a noticeable gap in the Department’s evidence base. Specifically, it appears that the Department holds quantitative data on apprenticeship numbers but lacks the qualitative insight needed to understand the reasons behind these changes.¹⁹ This indicates there is room for more engagement with key stakeholders, such as employers, training providers, and apprentices, to explore the underlying causes of shifting demand and determine *why* certain apprentice pathways experience changes in numbers.

In a letter to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning dated 19 December 2025, the Panel asked: “*What types of courses are most in demand, and which sectors benefit most from adult education provision?*” In his letter of response of 9 January 2026, the Minister advised that, at Highlands College, areas of high demand include Construction and Engineering (with particular emphasis on Green Skills and Renewable Energy training), Leadership and Management, Culinary

¹⁶ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p.4

¹⁷ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p. 4

¹⁸ Following the factual checking process, Skills Jersey confirmed that there has been no significant change in the number of people enrolling on courses, and instead, the change has been in the number of people applying for the CYPES subsidy for course fees.

¹⁹ Following the factual checking process, it was confirmed that CYPES holds qualitative data relevant to the change in care apprentices.

Arts and Hospitality Studies, as well as professional disciplines such as Human Resources, Accounting, and Project Management.”²⁰

In the letter, the Panel also asked the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning how many Islanders are currently engaged in lifelong learning opportunities, including apprenticeships, vocational courses, adult education programmes, and other forms of continuing education. In his reply of 9 January 2026, the Minister reported that 1,782 people were enrolled on full-time sixth form courses, covering both vocational and academic options for learners above compulsory school age (age 16 in Jersey)²¹. The Minister further advised that 441 people were enrolled in apprenticeships during the 2024/25 academic year, including all apprentices receiving the subsidy at Highlands College and other providers, as well as fewer than ten on higher-level apprenticeships supported through student finance²². Of these, 338 Islanders were engaged in apprenticeship programmes at Highlands College.²³ In addition, 287 Islanders were participating in adult education programmes at Highlands College, with a wider figure of 442 when including Level 4 learners and those at the Early Years Assessment Centre.²⁴

The use of quantitative data to capture engagement in lifelong learning is limited as it cannot capture the nuance of factors such as learners’ motivations and providers experiences. Professor Boeren explained that statistics on participation in lifelong learning are usually reported as percentages or headcount figures, typically reflecting how many learners are enrolled in different courses, which appears to be relevant to Jersey.²⁵ However, she emphasised the limitations of relying solely on these kinds of data and introduced the ‘Comprehensive Lifelong Learning Participation Model’, which views engagement in learning as an interconnected ecosystem. This model incorporates three levels: individuals at the micro level, education and training providers (including employers) at the meso level, and governments at the macro level, all of which collectively shape how a lifelong learning system functions. By recognising these interacting layers, the model offers a more holistic and meaningful understanding of lifelong learning, moving beyond simple participation rates to consider the motivations, needs and influences affecting learners, providers and policymakers alike. The Panel therefore recommends that the data should draw on Boeren’s Comprehensive Lifelong Learning Participation Model to allow analysis to move beyond simple participation rates or headcounts and instead provide a more holistic understanding of lifelong learning.²⁶

Finding 1: Highlands College remains the primary hub for vocational learning, delivering around 90% of provision. Apprenticeships span sectors such as construction, hospitality, early years, engineering, and hairdressing.

Finding 2: Private sector training exists but is fragmented and largely led by individual organisations. Provision is uneven across sectors and lacks a coherent ecosystem.

²⁰ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 09 January 2026](#)

²¹ [Moving to Jersey: Education](#)

²² [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 09 January 2026](#)

²³ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 09 January 2026](#)

²⁴ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 09 January 2026](#)

²⁵ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026., p.3

²⁶ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026., p.3

Finding 3: There is no central information point for apprenticeships and vocational opportunities. Learners and employers cannot easily see the full range of options across public and private providers.

Finding 4: Apprenticeship participation varies significantly by sector. Some pathways are growing while others are in decline, indicating misalignment between provision and labour-market demand.

Finding 5: Care apprenticeships have declined despite rising workforce needs, but no research has isolated the causes.

Finding 6: The Government of Jersey holds quantitative data on apprenticeships but lacks qualitative insight into motivations and barriers for learners and providers.

Recommendation 1: Skills Jersey, supported by CYPES , should establish and maintain a single online public portal for vocational learning, providing up-to-date information on apprenticeships, courses, providers, subsidies and trainee opportunities with clear guidance for learners, employers and providers, achieving at least 90% coverage of provision and 75% user satisfaction with a searchable catalogue, with filters, launching by Q4 2026, with quarterly updates thereafter.

Recommendation 2: CYPES and Skills Jersey should deliver a communications and culture-change campaign that promotes vocational routes and lifelong learning through case studies, events and school/employer outreach, achieving at least two campaign waves per year, a 15% awareness uplift (pre/post survey), 20 employer champions and 10 school events per term, with the strategy approved by Q3 2026, the first wave delivered by Q3 2026 and annual reviews thereafter.

Recommendation 3: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development should commission Skills Jersey to conduct targeted research into apprenticeship experiences, including motivations and barriers across sectors and a deep-dive into care and other priority sectors, publishing a report with sector-specific actions and at least 200 respondents by Q4 2026 and implementing an agreed action plan from Q1 2027 (commissioned by Q3 2026).

Range of courses available

As a key part of the review, the Panel sought to understand the current range of courses available to support lifelong vocational learning in Jersey. Establishing this baseline was essential to developing an accurate ‘snapshot’ of the Island’s vocational learning landscape and identifying any gaps in the provision.

To obtain this information, the Panel wrote to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning on 19 December 2025. In response, the Minister provided a table (see Table 1) setting out the apprenticeship courses currently offered through Highlands College. During the subsequent public hearing, the Minister described the Government’s approach to aligning vocational provision with the Island’s needs, stating:

“What we have got there is a really joined-up approach to what we are doing. We are looking at what industry want, we are looking at where we see the gaps, we are looking at the structure we have and where the gaps are, then using Skills Jersey to say where are the gaps in our industries. Put the whole lot together and you have a very effective longer-term scheme for training and pathways for the Island... It will change because need does change. Green skills,

for example, were recognised... I know Highlands has got a very good project which we will inform you of as soon as we possibly can.”²⁷

While this evidence highlighted current provision and the Government’s strategic approach, the Panel was also interested in understanding where stakeholders perceived gaps in opportunities for lifelong vocational learning. To explore this, the Panel wrote to a range of organisations, employers, training providers and community groups, asking the following question:

“In your view, are there adequate opportunities for lifelong vocational learning in Jersey?”

The Panel received a number of submissions addressing this question. These responses provided a broad range of perspectives on the adequacy of existing provision, with many highlighting strengths in current offerings, while others pointed to gaps, limitations, and areas requiring further development. A more detailed analysis of the skills gaps identified by stakeholders is provided in Section 3.

Changing Nature of Vocational Learning

The Panel noted that the UK had recently announced major reforms to its vocational education system through its qualification reform programme and accompanying White Paper published in December 2025 and therefore sought to understand the potential impact these changes may have on Jersey, given the Island’s reliance on UK curricula and qualifications. As Jersey aligns closely with the UK curriculum and relies on UK-regulated qualifications, changes to England’s system, particularly the move to withdraw many existing vocational awards and replace them with new Level 3 vocational qualifications (V Levels), have direct implications for the Island’s ability to maintain continuity, choice, and suitability in its post-16 offer.²⁸

During the Panel’s Public Hearing with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, Panel members sought clarity on the current challenges facing the vocational education sector. When asked by the Chair to identify the key pressures facing the College, the Principal of Highlands College directly referenced the shifting UK qualification landscape:

“Then the change in the U.K. qualification framework... we are working with [Guernsey and the Isle of Man] and presenting the challenges that we face with T-levels, which are now going to be V-levels, et cetera. That is a constant piece of work for us.”²⁹

This exchange highlights two main issues: first, that the scale and rapid pace of UK qualification reform continues to create a significant and ongoing workload for Jersey’s institutions; and second, that the Crown Dependencies are working together to ensure their shared concerns are represented, given that centrally designed qualifications often assume a larger population and broader labour market. During the Panel’s quarterly hearing in November 2025, concerns were amplified regarding the planned UK withdrawal of Business and Technology Education Council (‘BTEC’) qualifications. The Panel asked what assessment had been made of this, and the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning confirmed that uncertainties persist:

“They have rolled back a bit on BTECs in the last few months... We are interested to look at the way that V-levels are being introduced... At this stage, it is unknown.”³⁰

²⁷ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 08 January 2026](#), p.11

²⁸ [The Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper](#), House of Commons Library, December 2025, p.26

²⁹ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 08 January 2026](#), p.20

³⁰ [Transcript - Quarterly Hearing - Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning - 19 Nov 2025](#), p.42

The Minister further explained that although the UK is progressing with its consultation process, Jersey does not yet know how V Levels will operate, how they will be regulated, or whether they will be deliverable in the Island. Importantly, he noted:

“My concern... is that if they are similar to T-levels, we cannot use T-levels here. They are an English qualification; we cannot use them... they work well in big cities in the U.K., but that is about the only place they are working well.”³¹

This references structural barriers Jersey faces: T Levels require substantial employer-supported placements, and as the Minister noted, such a model does not translate well to small jurisdictions or rural settings. V Levels may replicate these problems. The Panel learnt that the Minister for Education and Highlands College are in discussion with the UK about the changes to the qualification system, however there is still a level of uncertainty and ambiguity on what these changes will mean for Jersey. These developments point to deeper structural challenges for Jersey, where the scale of the local economy and labour market does not easily align with qualification models designed for much larger jurisdictions. While the Panel welcomes the continued dialogue between the Minister for Education, Highlands College, and UK counterparts, it remains clear that significant uncertainty persists regarding how forthcoming changes, particularly the shift away from BTECs, will be implemented in practice, and the effect of this for Jersey. Until further clarity is secured, both learners and providers are operating in an environment marked by ambiguity, with the potential for disruption to curriculum planning, employer engagement, and long-term skills strategy.

Through this review, the Panel sought to gather further information on the anticipated changes to the vocational learning landscape in the UK, and the potential effects these may have on Jersey. The UK Government’s White Paper sets out a major restructuring of vocational routes. It confirms that:

“Replacing the current range of level 3 vocational qualifications with new ‘V Level’ qualifications... which will sit alongside A Levels and T Levels as the only level 3 options for 16 to 19-year-olds.”³²

The White Paper frames this as a simplification of nearly 900 existing Level 3 vocational qualifications, arguing that V Levels will provide clearer, higher-quality routes and enable students to explore vocational fields before specialising.³³ However, while the UK positions this as a streamlining of the existing system, the consequences for Jersey are more complex.³⁴ As Jersey imports qualifications but does not control their design or regulation, any narrowing of the UK market reduces the Island’s flexibility. Historically, qualifications such as BTECs have been valuable precisely because they allowed modular, coursework-based, locally adaptable approaches suited to small education systems and employers. Furthermore, the Island’s further and higher education institutions have been running BTEC courses successfully and achieving positive outcomes. The Minister stated this directly:

“BTECs will continue for the next few years... They are not redundant... but if you do not fund a qualification, eventually it will die off.”³⁵

This suggests that even if public funding remains available in Jersey, the wider UK institutional ecosystem supporting BTECs (awarding bodies, professional development, teaching materials) may erode over time.

³¹ [Transcript - Quarterly Hearing - Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning - 19 Nov 2025](#), p.42

³² [The Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper](#), House of Commons Library, December 2025, p.26

³³ [The Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper](#), House of Commons Library, December 2025, p.26

³⁴ [New V levels and post-16 qualifications explained – The Education Hub](#)

³⁵ [Transcript - Quarterly Hearing - Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning - 19 Nov 2025](#), p.42

The Panel's evidence indicates several significant risks arising from the UK's vocational qualification reforms. First, there is a potential reduction in choice for students, as Jersey may be unable to deliver V Levels if they mirror the structure of T Levels, which are currently unsuitable due to their regulatory framework and substantial workplace requirements; this could leave A Levels as the only universally deliverable Level 3 pathway, limiting options for learners who benefit from vocational or applied routes.

Secondly, the reforms are creating pressure on local provision and transition planning, with Highlands College and Hautlieu already dedicating considerable resources to assessing the UK changes despite persistent gaps in information; as the Minister noted, "we are absolutely on top of the changes... but there are some unknowns that we cannot deal with at the moment."³⁶

Third, the reforms risk misalignment with Jersey's workforce needs, as the UK system is being redesigned to suit a much larger and more diverse labour market, meaning qualifications built around extensive workplace components may be impractical in the Island's smaller context. Finally, Jersey's position is further complicated by its structural dependence on UK policy decisions, leaving the Island reactive rather than proactive in shaping its vocational pathways; as the Principal highlighted, managing these reforms is "a constant piece of work", and the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning reported the need to remind UK officials that "Jersey exists... and we are using their qualifications."³⁷

Furthermore, the Panel considers that the uncertainty surrounding the future of vocational qualifications and notes this may present a barrier for prospective learners, particularly those who want assurance that their qualifications will remain aligned with UK systems and recognised by UK universities. This lack of clarity may deter students from choosing vocational pathways, creating hesitation at a critical decision point in their education.

Professor Boeren's analysis reinforces this concern. She highlights that actors at the macro level, such as governments and national regulators, are not fully autonomous; their ability to implement change is 'bounded' by existing education structures, previous policy decisions, wider economic and social shocks, and the prevailing lifelong-learning culture within a country.³⁸ From this perspective, the proposed curriculum changes in the UK constitute a significant external factor that constrains local decision-makers and contributes to the uncertainty faced by learners. This external influence further underscores the need for clarity and stability to support informed learner choice and sustain confidence in vocational routes.

Overall, the planned changes to vocational qualifications in the UK presents a strategic challenge for Jersey's education landscape. While institutions and the Minister are actively engaged with UK counterparts and partnering with Guernsey and the Isle of Man to strengthen their collective influence, the Island remains dependent on decisions made elsewhere. The lack of clarity surrounding V Levels, combined with the gradual defunding of BTECs and the unsuitability of T Levels, leaves Jersey in a precarious position with respect to maintaining a diverse and workable vocational learning offer. Continued monitoring, early planning, and potentially greater exploration of alternative qualification routes will be essential to safeguarding opportunities for Jersey learners.

Finding 7: Jersey is highly exposed to UK qualification reforms due to curricular and awarding-body alignment. Changes to Level 3 pathways directly affect local continuity, choice, and suitability of vocational pathways. The withdrawal of BTECs risks narrowing choice and

³⁶ [Transcript, Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Quarterly Hearing, Witness the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 19 November 2025](#), p.42

³⁷ [Transcript - Quarterly Hearing - Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning - 19 Nov 2025](#), p.42

³⁸ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026, p.4

flexibility for learners. Even gradual phase-out in England undermines the support system (awarding bodies, resources, training) that Jersey relies on.

Finding 8: Key details about V Levels remain unclear. If they mirror T Levels, they may be unsuitable for Jersey given extensive placement demands. T-Level-style placement requirements are impractical in a small jurisdiction.

Recommendation 4: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should publish an assessment of UK qualification reforms (V and T-Levels) and BTEC viability, setting deliverable routes for Jersey and issuing a public timeline with mitigations, evidenced by a subject-level route map, a communications pack for parents, learners and employers, with a draft by Q3 2026 and publication by Q4 2026.

Recommendation 5: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should establish a provider transition support plan and fund to resource Highlands, Hautlieu and other providers for curriculum changes, CPD, materials, timetable redesign and student support, achieving 90% staff training in affected subjects, with the plan agreed by Q3 2026, funding live by Q4 2026 and termly reviews.

Accessibility for different learner groups

As part of the review, the Panel wanted to assess the accessibility of the current provision of lifelong vocational learning for different learner groups. The Panel was interested in finding out about the accessibility and inclusivity of the current opportunities for lifelong vocational learning and wanted to identify any potential barriers for learners. The Panel wrote to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning on 19 December 2025, and the letter included a number of questions relating to accessibility and inclusion. First, the Panel asked the following question:

“What proportion of applicants are unable to secure a place, and what are the main barriers to entry?”

In response on 9 January 2026, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning explained that *“there is robust monitoring of any pupils during Year 11 who are at risk of being NEET (not in education, employment or training) and all pupils identified in this group are offered support and guidance,”* adding that appropriate courses or training destinations are identified for learners at all levels and their progress is closely tracked.³⁹ The Minister clarified that applicants to Highlands are offered a place and course based on their results, whereas applicants to other sixth-form providers may hold conditional Level 3 offers that, if unmet, do not guarantee a place. The Minister noted that barriers to entry affect only a small number of applicants and are addressed through school and college transition teams; these include situations where students decline suitable alternative course offers, such as being offered a Level 2 option after not meeting Level 3 requirements, or where the move from a small specialist setting to a larger sixth-form environment generates anxiety.

The Minister further highlighted that, even after courses are confirmed and begun, a small number of students may disengage, in which case “alternatives are investigated... through the combined provision group.”⁴⁰ This indicates that barriers to entry are actively addressed through targeted support, managed transitions, and collaborative intervention between schools, colleges and the combined provision group.

³⁹ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 09 January 2026](#)

⁴⁰ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 09 January 2026](#)

In addition to this, the Panel's letter asked, *"How inclusive are adult education opportunities, particularly for older learners, those with caring responsibilities, or individuals with disabilities?"* The Minister responded that *"Highlands College has made significant progress on its inclusion journey, with a clear and sustained commitment to ensuring that every student thrives. The achievement of the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) from Optimus Education is a testament to this work, recognising the college's dedication to strengthening parental engagement."*⁴¹ Additionally, in the follow-up letter from the public hearing, the Panel asked a question related to inclusivity and accessibility and asked if there were any identified gaps in the provision. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning responded, "A gap in the current provision relates to adult learners aged 20 and over, who do not have an entitlement to additional learning support unless they are enrolled in full-time University College Jersey provision."⁴²

However, when the Panel consulted stakeholders about their perceptions of accessibility and inclusivity in lifelong vocational learning in Jersey, a contrasting picture emerged. Several submissions highlighted ongoing issues and significant barriers that hinder full participation for some learners. These concerns, which stand in contrast to the Minister's assurances of progress, are examined in greater detail in Section 3.

Demographics of learners

In order to assess the accessibility and inclusivity of lifelong learning in Jersey, the Panel sought to understand who is currently accessing provision by examining the demographic profile of learners. Establishing this baseline was important for building a clearer picture of how the existing system operates and whether opportunities are equitably reaching different groups within the population. To support this work, the Panel wrote to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning requesting a detailed demographic breakdown of participation, to show who is accessing lifelong learning opportunities.⁴³ In response, the Minister provided demographic information from Highlands College covering Adult Learning and Apprenticeships, as well as Sixth Form provision.

⁴¹ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 09 January 2026](#)

⁴² [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 23 January 2026](#), p.2

⁴³ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 09 January 2026](#) p.3

Highlands College demographic data for Adult Learning and Apprenticeship

- Age:

Age	16-18	19-24	25+
Adult Learning & Apprenticeships	19%	31%	50%

- Gender:

Gender	Female	Male
Adult Learning & Apprenticeships	27%	73%

Highlands College demographic data for Sixth Form

Gender	Female	Male
Sixth Form	55%	45%

Sixth Form: note age range of the majority 16-18.

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This data is significant in establishing who is currently benefiting from Jersey's lifelong learning and vocational pathways. Notably, half (50%) of all learners engaged in Adult Learning and Apprenticeships are over the age of 25, indicating that lifelong learning is playing a substantial role in supporting adult reskilling, upskilling, and career transitions. This is consistent with the remit of lifelong learning frameworks but also highlights the importance of ensuring that provision remains accessible to working adults who may have different needs, schedules, and financial circumstances compared to younger learners.

The age distribution further shows that while younger adults (19 to 24) form nearly a third of participants, 16- to 18-year-olds represent a much smaller proportion (19%). This likely reflects the fact that most learners in this age group transition into Sixth Form or other full-time study rather than directly into adult learning routes, but it also underscores the need to ensure post-16 pathways remain coherent and clearly signposted.

Gender representation within Adult Learning and Apprenticeships reveals a significant imbalance, 73% of participants are male, compared to only 27% female. This contrasts sharply with the Sixth Form population, where female students make up the majority (55%). The disparity suggests that gendered patterns persist in vocational and apprenticeship routes, with women substantially under-represented in adult vocational learning. This raises important questions about whether cultural expectations, programme design, sectoral distribution, or accessibility barriers are contributing to unequal participation.

The underrepresentation of women in apprenticeships is a trend which is seen globally. Research from the International Labour Organization suggests that entrenched cultural norms, gender stereotyping, a lack of career guidance, safety concerns, and family responsibilities all contribute to women's under-representation in high-quality apprenticeships⁴⁵. Without targeted action to address

⁴⁴ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 09 January 2026](#), p.3

⁴⁵ [Quality Apprenticeships and gender | International Labour Organization](#)

these barriers, apprenticeship systems risk reinforcing rather than reducing gender inequality. The range of occupations in which apprenticeships are offered in many countries tends to be narrow and heavily concentrated within traditional trades, sectors that are typically perceived as 'male occupations' and often involve physically demanding work, such as construction, mechanics, and engineering⁴⁶. As a result, many young women are discouraged from viewing these pathways as viable career options.

This pattern has been especially evident in Ireland, where female participation in apprenticeships has historically been very low, which has largely stemmed from the dominance of programmes in traditionally male sectors such as construction, engineering, and motor trades. In response, Ireland has begun expanding its apprenticeship offer and has introduced incentives, such as a €2,666 grant for employers who recruit female craft apprentices, to encourage greater gender diversity. Since the grant was introduced, the number of female apprentices has risen by 65%, increasing from 1,531 to 2,519 by the end of April 2025. This means women now account for around 9% of all apprentices, compared with just 6% in January 2022⁴⁷.

Germany has taken a different approach through its annual 'Girls' Day', which invites girls and young women into workplaces to explore a wider range of professions, and is shown to be effective⁴⁸. Both initiatives aim to challenge entrenched gender norms and promote more inclusive apprenticeship systems. This international evidence is highly relevant, as it shows that Jersey's gender imbalance in apprenticeships mirrors global trends, where women remain significantly under-represented.⁴⁹ By recognising this pattern, the Panel hopes to highlight the importance of considering affirmative action measures, such as those used in Ireland and Germany, to encourage women's entry into apprenticeships and support their wider participation in lifelong learning opportunities, to ensure that Jersey's apprenticeship population more accurately reflects the demographics of the wider population.⁵⁰

Overall, the demographic data indicates that while lifelong learning opportunities in Jersey are being accessed by a diverse age range, with a particularly strong uptake among adults, the system appears less representative in terms of gender balance.⁵¹ The Panel notes that there is limited demographic data available on the private sector provision of lifelong vocational learning.ⁱ However, in consideration of the available data, the Panel recognised that the demographic trends highlight the need for targeted strategies to widen participation, particularly among under-represented groups, and to ensure that lifelong learning remains accessible, flexible, and responsive to the needs of Jersey's whole population.

During the course of the Review, the Panel sought demographic data relating to participation in vocational learning delivered by private providers. The Panel was informed, however, that such data is not collected or held in a central or systematic way. As a result, the Panel was unable to obtain information on the age, gender, socioeconomic background, disability status, or other demographic characteristics of individuals accessing private sector vocational training. The absence of this information is regrettable, as it limits the Panel's ability to fully assess the accessibility and inclusivity of the private vocational learning market. Without demographic data, it is not possible to determine

⁴⁶ [Quality Apprenticeships and gender | International Labour Organization](#)

⁴⁷ [Apprenticeship Programmes – Tuesday, 27 May 2025 – Parliamentary Questions \(34th Dáil\) – Houses of the Oireachtas](#)

⁴⁸ Girls' Day – Future Prospects for Girls, available at: <https://www.girls-day.de/ueber-den-girls-day/was-ist-der-girls-day2/english> accessed 12 February 2026

⁴⁹ [gender-commission-evidence-review-summary-paper-improving-gender-balance-in-apprenticeships.pdf](#)

⁵⁰ [Bridging the gender gap in vocational education and training: national success stories | CEDEFOP](#)

⁵¹ Following the factual checking process, Highlands College confirmed that all apprenticeship schemes are open access, however this is not reflected in take up by gender.

whether particular groups are under-represented, whether barriers exist for specific cohorts, or whether the overall offer is equitably serving the Island's population. To mitigate this limitation, the Panel invited submissions from members of the public and stakeholders, specifically asking questions related to perceived accessibility, inclusivity, and potential barriers to participation. The qualitative insights provided through these submissions have been valuable in helping the Panel consider different experiences of vocational learning in the private sector. These findings are explored in more detail in Section 3.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

During the Panel's public hearing with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning on 8th January 2026, the Panel raised a number of questions regarding the accessibility and inclusivity of lifelong vocational learning opportunities for all learners. Firstly, the Chair raised a question regarding the current accessibility for different groups of learners such as disabled people and neurodivergent learners. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning provided the following response:

"Deputy C Curtis: You said you are starting from a good point but do you think there is sufficient accessibility for different groups, like disabled people and neurodivergent learners?"

*The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning: There will always be, I think, a need to improve accessibility across particular groups within our society, for 2 reasons. First of all, thankfully, as a society we recognise more that there is diversity within our population and we do not put that diversity just into a corner and ignore it. I think that is a huge step forward for us but part of that means we have to respond to that in what we provide. I know Highlands College do a lot of work to support students - perhaps, Jo, in a moment you might want to talk through a few of those things, from the principal yourself - but I think across our wider piece in terms of apprenticeships there is work to be done and it is part of the report that we produced, that dialogue with stakeholders. I think it does recognise that. I think it is about partnership here between what we do in government, what we do with our providers, our government providers, our schools, our colleges, but also with employers themselves and how many ... what they need to step up and take that role as well: how can we support that and make it work? I think that is the dialogue that needs to happen from now on."*⁵²

The Panel wanted to understand the key challenges facing Highlands College currently. When Deputy Miles asked the Principal of Highlands College about the challenges the College was facing, the Principal raised the issues with the accessibility of the physical environment as a key challenge. The Principal highlighted that the challenges with the physical environment were causing issues for accessibility for a number of groups, including 14- to 16-year-olds and disabled learners. The Principal explained that there were safeguarding challenges due to the number of buildings (11) across two different sites.

"Deputy H.M. Miles: I have some questions specifically around the role of Highlands. You are the principal provider of vocational learning in Jersey. Can you tell us what your key challenges are at the moment?"

Principal, Highlands College: Well, you will be well versed in the physical environment at this stage, but it is worth revisiting because it touches on a number of areas: accessibility for 14 to 16-year-olds, accessibility for disabled learners and some safeguarding challenges with the 11 buildings, 2 sites. We have done cyber simulations and some business continuity planning and it is very difficult to knock down the site in the worst case scenario presently if we needed

⁵² [Transcript – Lifelong Learning Review – Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning – 8 January 2026](#), p.3-4

*to. There is a number of issues that the estate provide pretty much almost on a daily basis, to be honest.*⁵³

This exchange is significant, as the Principal highlighted that the physical environment of the college causes critical challenges for accessibility. Further, in their submission to the review, Highlands College provided a detailed breakdown of the issues with accessibility.

*“Each year, students transitioning from fully accessible secondary schools face reduced access at Highlands. If a mobility-impaired student has an accident outside their course, when they return to class in the Media or Art blocks, where buildings were condemned in the 1990s - we must re-timetable entire programmes, simply to maintain access. While SEND funding has improved in schools as well as here at the College, there is no equivalent high-needs funding for post-16 learners at Highlands. Without investment in an accessible estate and equitable funding for adult and high-needs learners, lifelong vocational learning in Jersey cannot fully meet community needs or the ambitions set for the island’s future workforce.”*⁵⁴

The accessibility issues outlined by Highlands College represent a significant barrier to lifelong vocational learning in Jersey. As the Island’s principal provider, delivering around 90% of vocational and technical learning, limitations within its estate have a direct impact on the overall accessibility of post-16 and adult education in Jersey. The College’s evidence demonstrates that several buildings lack compliant lifts and accessible toilets, meaning that students with mobility needs cannot be guaranteed equal access to classrooms, workshops, or essential support services. This creates a stark disparity for learners transitioning from fully accessible secondary schools into an environment where access may be reduced. These constraints, combined with the absence of dedicated high-needs funding for post-16 learners, mean that Jersey’s vocational education system is not yet fully equipped to meet the needs of all learners. Ensuring physical accessibility and equitable funding is therefore fundamental to improving inclusivity across the Island’s lifelong learning offer.

Additionally, the Panel learnt that Highlands College offered vocational learning opportunities for some students aged 14-16 as part of their core curriculum. The Panel found that the College offered a blend of vocational and academic learning to 170 14- to 16-year-olds from Grainville and Haute Vallée on a weekly basis. During the public hearing, the Panel asked whether this offer was open to students from other schools:

Deputy H.M. Miles: Can I just ask you a quick question about the 170? So you have got 14 to 16-year-olds over from Grainville and Haute Vallée. Why are you not bringing them in from Les Quennevais and Le Rocquier?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning: Capacity.

*Principal, Highlands College: We have a capacity issue. I cannot currently meet all the demand from Grainville for motor vehicle because of workshop space. Les Quennevais, Jon Sindall, the new head, would like to open up those options. He is a new head to the Island but he is interested in accessing our vocational offer. It is complementary because it is the things that we deliver that they cannot do in a school - motor vehicle, hair and beauty, culinary arts - but all of those things are really workshop-confined spaces. Getting on to a new campus, flexible learning spaces would enable greater access for younger students.*⁵⁵

⁵³ [Transcript – Lifelong Learning Review – Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning – 8 January 2026](#), p.20

⁵⁴ [Written Submission, Highlands College and University College Jersey](#), 14 January 2026, p.3

⁵⁵ [Transcript – Lifelong Learning Review – Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning – 8 January 2026](#), p.12

Through this exchange, the Panel learnt that the offer of vocational learning to 14 to 16 years is inconsistent and limited to two schools due to the capacity issues at the College. The physical campus and infrastructure at Highlands College present a limitation. This limitation is dual, as it is both on the range of vocational learning opportunities available and it places a limit on the ability to introduce students to vocational learning at a younger age. The Panel noted that this is a significant limitation, which may add to the perceived divide of academic and vocational pathways for young people. The Panel found that the false dichotomy of academic and vocational learning was therefore reinforced for students from schools that do not have access to these vocational learning sessions.

This issue was raised during the Panel's discussion with the JYA, as all members present expressed that there is a 'clear divide' between academic and vocational routes. The JYA members expressed that there was a lack of information, and that the opportunities for vocational pathways varied between schools. The JYA members highlighted that they felt that some schools offered more of a blend between vocational and academic pathways than others, and they felt there is sometimes pressure to pursue academic qualifications, such as A levels, over more vocational qualifications, such as BTECs.

Finding 9: The Panel found that vocational learning opportunities are available to 14- to 16-year-olds from only two secondary schools, due to the capacity issues at Highlands College.

Recommendation 6: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should, by the end of Q4 2026 complete a comprehensive assessment of Highlands College's current capacity to deliver vocational learning to 14- to 16-year-olds across all secondary schools. The Minister should develop a plan by Q1 2027 to expand vocational learning opportunities to all secondary schools by September 2027 to ensure fair and equitable access for all students.

Accessibility and Inclusivity: Stakeholders perspectives

The Panel also sought to understand how stakeholders perceived the accessibility and inclusivity of lifelong vocational learning opportunities in Jersey. To gather this insight, the Panel wrote to a range of stakeholders and asked a series of questions. Firstly, the Panel asked stakeholders to comment on how accessible and inclusive lifelong vocational learning currently is, including whether particular groups face barriers to participation and what those barriers might be. Secondly, the Panel invited views on whether existing lifelong learning opportunities adequately meet the needs of learners at different stages of life and career, and whether any skills gaps or sector-specific needs remain unaddressed. By asking these questions, the Panel sought to gather stakeholder perspectives on learning and skills development across all stages of adult life, rather than concentrating predominantly on younger learners. This approach was intended to build a clearer picture of how well lifelong learning provision supports all learners in Jersey, regardless of age, background, or career stage. Furthermore, Professor Boeren emphasised the importance of recognising and understanding accessibility challenges, noting that 'awareness of accessibility issues as experienced by its citizens provides a good starting point to explore ways to lower such barriers.'⁵⁶ Guided by this insight, the Panel sought to identify the different ways in which learners experience accessibility issues, using these insights as a foundation for exploring how such barriers might be reduced.

The Panel received a number of submissions which raised concerns about the accessibility and inclusivity of the current provision of lifelong learning in Jersey. Stakeholders highlighted barriers affecting a range of learner groups, including people with disabilities, neurodivergent learners, older learners, women, career changers, individuals with English as an additional language, people with caring responsibilities, and prison leavers. For example, Highlands College outlined significant

⁵⁶ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026., p.6

challenges in meeting demand from groups such as the Prison Service and organisations like Les Amis, citing funding issues⁵⁷. The Panel learnt that, of the college's 11 buildings, only four have fully compliant accessible lifts and four provide disabled-accessible toilets, meaning equal access to classrooms, workshops and support services cannot be guaranteed⁵⁸. In addition to physical barriers, the College identified the absence of high-needs funding for post-16 learners and limitations in the funding model for adult learners as key constraints affecting participation⁵⁹. Overall, the submission from Highlands College highlighted a series of structural and financial challenges that impact the accessibility and inclusivity of lifelong vocational learning opportunities in Jersey.

Submissions to the Panel also raised concerns regarding the accessibility and inclusivity of lifelong vocational learning opportunities for neurodivergent learners in Jersey. Stakeholders frequently reported that autistic adults and individuals with conditions such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder ('ADHD') face specific challenges when engaging with vocational learning pathways.⁶⁰ In its submission to the review, Autism Jersey outlined several significant barriers for autistic adults, including those with learning disabilities, sensory needs, anxiety, or communication differences.⁶¹ The organisation reported that many learning environments are not sensory-appropriate, with unpredictable or overwhelming settings creating barriers to engagement.

Administrative requirements, such as navigating forms, meeting deadlines, understanding multi-step instructions, or managing communication demands, were also identified as challenging for many learners with autism.⁶² Autism Jersey further highlighted a lack of one-to-one or -one or autism-informed support and noted that pathways and information are not always accessible or easy to understand⁶³. Transport was also cited as a key barrier to participation, as many autistic adults supported by the organisation cannot drive and may be unable to use public transport, limiting their ability to access training or workplace-based learning. Autism Jersey also observed that there are few -based learning. Autism Jersey also observed that there are few autism-friendly learning options for adults who have been out of work for extended periods or who require structured, predictable and -friendly learning options for adults who have been out of work for extended periods or who require structured, predictable and lower-pressure learning environments.⁶⁴ Autism Jersey noted that many individuals rely on clear information, steady pacing and consistent support, which is not routinely available, and therefore acts as a barrier to participating in lifelong learning opportunities in Jersey⁶⁵. Similar issues were raised in an anonymous submission (Anonymous 1), which acknowledged that inclusive teaching practices and adaptive technologies are available in parts of Jersey's vocational education system⁶⁶. However, the submission described the experience for neurodivergent learners as 'inconsistent', citing outdated and inaccessible buildings and variation in the level of support offered across different providers⁶⁷.

A further anonymous submission (Anonymous 3), which focused on the barriers faced by prisoners and prison-leavers, also identified challenges for neurodivergent learners within this group. The

⁵⁷ [Written Submission – Highlands College, 14 January 2026](#)

⁵⁸ [Written Submission – Highlands College, 14 January 2026](#)

⁵⁹ [Written Submission – Highlands College, 14 January 2026](#)

⁶⁰ During the factual checking process, Highlands College clarified that the college offers support for SEND students, including tailored support services, a sensory room and there is a Government of Jersey funded JET services back to work scheme available.

⁶¹ [Written Submission – Autism Jersey, 30 December 2025](#)

⁶² [Written Submission – Autism Jersey, 30 December 2025](#)

⁶³ [Written Submission – Autism Jersey, 30 December 2025](#)

⁶⁴ [Written Submission – Autism Jersey, 30 December 2025](#)

⁶⁵ [Written Submission – Autism Jersey, 30 December 2025](#)

⁶⁶ [Written Submission – Anonymous 1, 22 December 2025](#)

⁶⁷ [Written Submission – Anonymous 1, 22 December 2025](#)

submission highlighted that neurodivergent individuals, including those with dyslexia and ADHD, often encounter additional hurdles when attempting to access lifelong vocational learning opportunities, compounding the barriers already faced during reintegration following release.⁶⁸

As a combined body of evidence, these submissions suggest that neurodivergent learners in Jersey encounter a range of interconnected environmental, administrative and structural barriers that restrict equitable access to lifelong vocational learning. These findings highlight the need for more consistent and well-informed practices across the vocational learning landscape to enable full participation for all learners.

Mature learners

A number of submissions highlighted mature learners and mid-career changers as groups facing notable barriers to participating in lifelong vocational learning. The Panel heard that these learners often encounter significant financial and structural challenges which limit their ability to access or sustain vocational training. For example, a written submission from Jersey Finance identified older learners as one of the groups experiencing barriers, including course costs, limited part-time or modular options, time pressures, and a lack of awareness of available learning pathways⁶⁹. Similar concerns were raised in the submission from Toni & Guy Jersey, which explained that funding arrangements present a substantial barrier for adults seeking to retrain in sectors such as hairdressing, as mature learners are typically required to undertake training while earning apprenticeship-level wages.⁷⁰ For individuals with existing financial commitments, this makes mid-career transitions difficult to pursue.

The submission from Toni & Guy Jersey also noted that current vocational routes are not fully accessible for adult learners due to factors such as low training wages, lengthy training requirements, and the absence of accelerated pathways that recognise prior experience.⁷¹ Additionally, a written submission from Jersey International Centre of Advanced Studies ('JICAS') highlighted the dual barriers faced by "islanders who are looking to undertake a career change or upskill for the purpose of promotion, and women specifically, face additional barriers to participation."⁷²⁷³ Therefore, the Panel learnt that stakeholders considered adult learners, in particular mature learners, to be one of the groups which was facing the most barriers to participation in lifelong vocational learning in Jersey. This is significant as it highlights that stakeholders perceive barriers to be extremely significant and widespread for adult learners.

The Panel notes that it is important to identify and understand stakeholders perceived barriers to accessing lifelong learning because these perceptions shape how individuals engage with education and can highlight obstacles that quantitative data alone may not reveal. Moreover, stakeholder's perceptions provide a critical insight into cultural perceptions of barriers for learning. Therefore, it is significant that stakeholders most frequently identified adult learners as a group facing barriers to participation. This suggests that challenges for adult learners are widely recognised across sectors and may reflect broader societal perceptions about who lifelong learning is "for," the pressures adults

⁶⁸ [Written Submission – Anonymous 3, 13 January 2026](#)

⁶⁹ [Written Submission – Jersey Finance, 8 January 2026](#)

⁷⁰ [Written Submission – Toni & Guy Jersey, 6 January 2026](#)

⁷¹ [Written Submission – Toni & Guy Jersey, 6 January 2026](#)

⁷² [Written Submission – JICAS, 16 December 2025](#)

⁷³ The Panel notes that JICAS is a postgraduate research centre and therefore operates as a higher education organisation. As such, its remit sits slightly outside the core scope of this review, which does not encompass the vocational aspects under consideration. However, the Panel recognises that the contributions provided in JICAS's submission were meaningful to the wider context of lifelong learning and skills development in Jersey, particularly in helping to understand broader educational perspectives.

face, and the accessibility of provision for those balancing work, family, or financial constraints. While perceived barriers may not always align with the realities of adult learners, the consistency of this feedback suggests that concerns about adult learners' access reflect broader societal perceptions and warrant closer examination in the Jersey context.

In contrast, the Panel also received a submission from the Jersey branch of the University of the Third Age ('U3A'), which provides informal, peer-led learning opportunities for older adults focused on personal development, social engagement, cognitive wellbeing and recreational learning.⁷⁴ U3A reported that its members tend to disengage when age-related health issues, loss of transport, or caring responsibilities prevent continued participation, with additional pressures arising from grandparenting duties during school holidays.⁷⁵ This submission therefore provides a positive perspective on the opportunities for mature learners in Jersey. While the Panel recognises that U3A offers valuable learning opportunities for older people in Jersey, its activities are informal and non-accredited and therefore fall slightly outside the scope of this review. However, the barriers identified in its submission provide useful insight into the broader challenges faced by older learners and remain relevant when considering participation in lifelong vocational learning more widely.⁷⁶

In summary, the evidence suggests that adult learners, and especially those in the mid-career stages, face significant barriers to lifelong vocational learning. This highlights the dual and intersecting nature of barriers to participation in learning opportunities and highlights the need for responsive barriers that consider how structural, demographic and situational factors have a cumulative effect on accessibility. The Panel notes evidence showing that part-time and mature learning will be increasingly important for individuals seeking to adapt to the changing labour market. It is therefore essential that high-quality, accessible opportunities are available for those wishing to develop their skills throughout the course of their lives.

Financial barriers

A number of submissions identified financial constraints as a significant barrier to participation in lifelong vocational learning in Jersey. Respondents highlighted that these barriers could manifest in several ways, including the upfront cost of courses, the loss of income associated with taking time away from employment to undertake training or apprenticeships, and the limited financial support available for adults seeking to retrain or progress in their careers. For example, the submission from Jersey Finance noted that "lower-income individuals" are disproportionately affected and emphasised that "common barriers include course costs, limited part-time or modular provision, time constraints, and limited awareness of available pathways."⁷⁷ Similarly, JICAS identified funding as one of the key barriers to participation, indicating that financial support mechanisms are often insufficient to meet the needs of adult learners.

A written submission from NEON Salon and School highlighted challenges faced by adults wishing to retrain or parents returning to the workforce, stating that they may struggle to update their skills due to a "lack of funding for ongoing progression."⁷⁸ This submission also pointed to system-level issues, including funding models that prioritise initial training over adult upskilling, unclear progression routes beyond Level 3, and the limited range of provision available given the Island's size. The submission highlighted the additional cost for learners who had completed a Level 3 qualification in hairdressing,

⁷⁴ [Written Submission – Jersey u3a, 22 December 2025](#)

⁷⁵ [Written Submission – Jersey u3a, 22 December 2025](#)

⁷⁶ Following the factual checking process, Highlands College confirmed that 500 to 600 adults enrol in Adult and Community Education every term. The Panel notes that while this information is useful for understanding the broader lifelong learning system, this is outside of the scope of the review.

⁷⁷ [Written Submission – Jersey Finance, 8 January 2026](#)

⁷⁸ [Written Submission – Neon Salon and School, 21 December 2025](#)

as learners had to go off island to advance their skills, which creates additional financial pressure. In summary, these submissions indicate that financial pressure, both direct and indirect, plays a substantial role in limiting equitable access to lifelong vocational learning and may particularly disadvantage those seeking to retrain, upskill, or re-enter the labour market.

Finding 10: Stakeholder experiences indicate that accessibility challenges are not fully reflected in official monitoring. Lived experiences highlight persistent barriers despite assurances of increasing inclusivity.

Finding 11: Adult participation in apprenticeships is strong, but gender imbalance is pronounced. Around three-quarters of apprentices are male, contrasting with more gender balanced sixth-form participation.

Finding 12: Neurodivergent learners face environmental, structural, and support-related barriers. Access, adjustments, and continuity of support remain inconsistent across settings.

Finding 13: Adult learners, especially mid-career and women, face significant cost and flexibility barriers. Limited part-time and modular options and income constraints inhibit participation and progression.

Finding 14: Financial barriers remain significant due to upfront fees, lost earnings, and limited support for retraining and career changers. These pressures disproportionately affect adults seeking to re-enter or pivot within the labour market.

Finding 15: Adult education programmes at Highlands show high completion and attainment. Where learners enrol, outcomes are generally positive, indicating good delivery quality.

Finding 16: Routes for reskilling and career-changes are limited outside core sectors. Entry-level pathways are clearer in construction, hospitality, hair and beauty, and health and social care than in other fields.

Recommendation 7: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, working with providers and inclusion leads, should publish an all-age accessibility and inclusion strategy for vocational learning that strengthens transition support, flexible/part-time options, recognition of prior learning and additional-needs pathways, drafting by Q3 2026 and implementing from Q1 2027.

Recommendation 8: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, in partnership with Skills Jersey, providers and employers, should introduce a gender balance action plan using mentoring, bursaries and role-model campaigns to address subject and sector imbalances, reducing gender imbalance by at least 10% in four priority programmes within 24 months, with the plan agreed by Q3 2026, launched by Q4 2026 and evaluated annually.

Recommendation 9: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should launch a modular, stackable and blended adult career-changer programme with guidance and recognition of prior learning for mid-career transitions, delivering at least 5 new modular offers, 100 adult enrolments in year one, with design completed by Q3 2026 and first intakes by Q1 2027.

2.2 Apprenticeship Programmes

- Structure and design of apprenticeship pathways
- Participation rates
- Outcomes: completion, progression, employment impact
- Funding arrangements

As part of its review, the Panel sought to gain a detailed understanding of the apprenticeship programmes currently available in Jersey. In particular, the Panel aimed to examine the structure and design of apprenticeship pathways, participation levels, key outcomes, including completion, attainment, progression and employment, and the funding arrangements that underpin these programmes. To gather this information, the Panel wrote questions to both the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. In his response dated 9 January 2026, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning provided data indicating that apprenticeship completion rates remained consistently high over recent years. The Minister reported that the average completion rate across academic years 2020 to 2024 was above 90%, with the exception of 2021/22, where the rate fell to 85% as a result of Covid-19 impacts. More recent figures supplied for Highlands College showed completion rates of 95% in both 2024/25 and 2023/24, and 93% in 2022/23, alongside attainment rates of 99% in 2024/25 and 2023/24 and 97% in 2022/23. The Minister noted that progression data was not included, as apprentices are typically already in employment.

As part of its review, the Panel sought to gain a clear understanding of the funding arrangements that support apprenticeship programmes in Jersey. In particular, the Panel aimed to establish what types of financial support are available, who is eligible to access them, what costs they are intended to cover, and what restrictions or criteria apply. To obtain this information, the Panel wrote to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, asking: *“What forms of financial support (such as bursaries, fee waivers, or grants) are currently available to Islanders undertaking lifelong vocational learning, and how many learners have accessed these in recent years?”*⁷⁹

In his response, the Minister confirmed that a grant of £1,852 per year is available to adults to assist with the cost of apprenticeship training⁸⁰. He also outlined additional grants available under the Education (Grants and Allowances) (Jersey) Order 2018, including:

- A tuition grant for a one-year full-time Level 3 arts-related course in the British Islands, capped at the equivalent cost of a Highlands College course.
- A skills bursary of £6,675 per year (for up to two years) to support Level 2 or Level 3 qualifications not available in Jersey; eligibility for this bursary is limited to students under the age of 19.

The Minister also provided data on the number of learners accessing financial support between academic years 2023 and 2025, noting that apprenticeship grants represent the largest category of funded learners:

⁷⁹ [Letter from the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 19 December 2025](#)

⁸⁰ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 09 January 2026](#)

Number of Learners Accessing Financial Support: Academic Years 2023 - 2025

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Level 3 Arts	< 5	< 5	< 5
Skills Bursary	5	11	< 5
Apprentice	473	441	439

81

In addition to government-funded schemes, the Minister highlighted that several private organisations and educational trusts also offer bursaries. These are listed on the Student Finance website; however, as they are administered externally, the Government does not hold data on the number of recipients.

Further, in his response to a question regarding the availability of apprenticeship programmes, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning explained that ‘apprenticeship funding is available for any training that meets the eligibility criteria’. The Panel queried this and asked for clarification regarding the ‘eligibility criteria’ for apprenticeships. In response, the Minister’s team provided a link to the relevant webpage, which sets out the following requirements: applicants must have lived in Jersey for at least five years, hold Entitled or Entitled to Work status and be employed in the sector in which they wish to study⁸².

Funding model

The Panel sought to understand how funding for lifelong vocational learning is being delivered in practice. It noted that the Budget 2025–2028 identifies “investing in lifelong learning and future skills provision” as one of twelve strategic priorities and therefore asked the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to explain how this investment has been operationalised to date. The Minister reported that the measures taken under the Common Strategic Priority commitment to date include:

- The Skills Development Scheme, for which priority sectors have been identified and a tender process is underway to create new on-island training pathways.
- Distance learning: enhancement to financial support enabling adults to access flexible education, including Level 4+ vocational courses with work-based components such as those offered by Teesside University in electrical and mechanical engineering.

The Panel additionally requested clarification on the proportion of funding allocated to apprenticeships compared with other forms of lifelong learning. In response, the Minister provided an expenditure breakdown for Highlands College, noting that of its £17.8 million budget (including income of approximately £3.7 million), £1.5 million relates directly to apprenticeships, with other lifelong learning provision, including Adult and Community Education (£215,000) and University College Jersey (£1.25 million), forming part of the broader expenditure alongside further education, sixth-form provision, SEN support, and the indirect costs of running the College.⁸³ Drawing on the data provided, the Panel observes that only a relatively small proportion of Highlands College’s total expenditure is dedicated to apprenticeships and adult lifelong learning. Apprenticeships account for approximately 8.4% of the College’s £17.8 million expenditure budget, while Adult and Community Education represent just 1.2%.

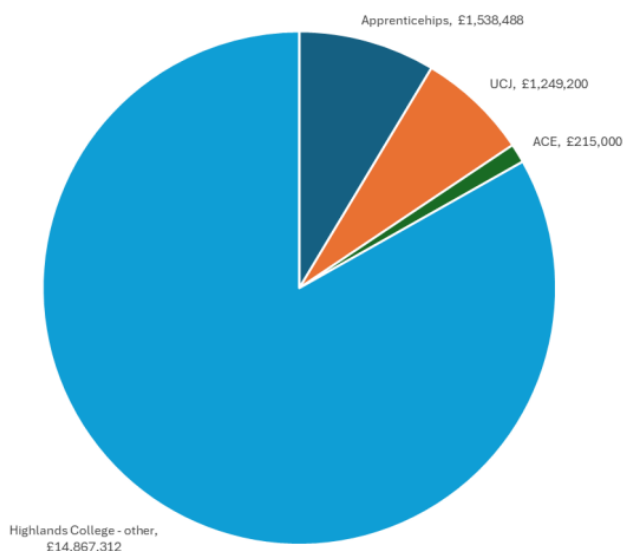
⁸¹ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 09 January 2026](#)

⁸² [Apprenticeship funding and subsidised training](#) (accessed 28 January 2026)

⁸³ Following the factual checking process, Highlands College clarified that the turnover is approximately £17 million, which includes income of approximately £3.7 million. Highlands College confirmed that it is mostly Government of Jersey funded income, but income also includes retail, room rental and individual students fee payers.

By contrast, the majority of funding, around 83.7%, falls within the “other” category, which includes further education, sixth-form provision, SEN support, and the indirect costs associated with operating the College. While it is recognised that these core functions require substantial resources and form a significant part of Highlands College’s remit, the allocation indicates that investment directly supporting lifelong vocational learning represents a modest share of the overall budget. Given the Government’s stated strategic priority to invest in lifelong learning and future skills provision, the current distribution suggests that there may be limited financial capacity within existing structures to significantly expand or diversify vocational options within the current budget.

a) Could you outline the proportion of funding earmarked for apprenticeships versus other forms of lifelong learning?



[FIGURE 2]⁸⁴

2.3 Adult Education

- Opportunities for career changes and reskilling
- Private sector provision
- Support for upskilling the local workforce.

The Panel also sought to understand the outcomes associated with the adult education programmes delivered by Highlands College. In his letter of response, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning provided completion and attainment data for professional adult education courses over the past three academic years. The Minister noted that progression data is not recorded for these programmes, as the majority of Islanders participating in lifelong vocational learning are already in employment. The figures supplied indicated consistently strong performance, with completion rates of 98% in 2024/25, 93% in 2023/24 and 95% in 2022/23. Attainment rates were similarly high, reported

⁸⁴ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 23 January 2026](#), p.8

at 97% in 2024/25 and 93% in both 2023/24 and 2022/23. These results suggest that adult learners enrolled in Highlands College's professional programmes generally achieve high levels of course completion and qualification attainment.

Adult Education Programmes: Highlands College Adult Education Programmes Completion and Attainment: progression not recorded, majority of islanders engaged in lifelong vocational learning are employed.

Professional	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23
Completion	98%	93%	95%
Attainment	97%	93%	93%

85

The Panel wanted to identify the opportunities for career changes and reskilling on offer in Jersey. In particular, the Panel sought to understand the full range of courses available in Jersey to support upskilling, reskilling, on-the-job training, and continued professional development provided by the private sector. Through desktop research, the Panel identified a significant gap in publicly accessible information. Specifically, there is no centralised website or database that captures the breadth of training opportunities available across the Island. While Highlands College provides clear information on its provision, the detail regarding private-sector training options is limited or, in many cases, unavailable to the public.

To mitigate this lack of comprehensive data, the Panel invited members of the public to submit case-study-style accounts of their experiences with apprenticeships, workplace training, and other development pathways. These submissions aimed to provide qualitative insight into the current landscape of training and skills development in Jersey, particularly in areas where formal information is sparse.

The Panel also wrote to a wide range of stakeholders involved in training and workforce development across key sectors of the Island's economy. This included representatives from industries such as hair and beauty, hospitality, dentistry, finance, law, banking, telecommunications, electrical services, and construction, among others. The purpose of this outreach was to gain insight into the types of training currently offered within each sector, understand any challenges faced by employers in delivering or accessing training, and identify opportunities to strengthen Jersey's skills landscape.

The Panel received a number of submissions from stakeholders involved in private-sector delivery of training. Notably, a detailed submission from NEON Salon and School provided insight into both the current landscape of provision and the challenges faced by independent training providers. The submission stated:

*"In my view there is a core level of provision in key sectors such as construction, hospitality, health and social care, and hair and beauty, which supports entry-level training and early-career development. However, access to ongoing vocational learning for adults seeking to upskill, retrain, or progress later in their careers remains limited."*⁸⁵

NEON Salon and School also outlined several structural barriers affecting private training providers. In particular, they noted:

"Specifically in relation to resourcing, private training providers do not benefit from the same level of underlying subsidies as local colleges. As a result, private providers are required to

⁸⁵ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 09 January 2026](#)

⁸⁶ [Written Submission – Neon Salon and School, 21 December 2025](#)

deliver the same qualifications and assessment standards without the same level of subsidised infrastructure or operational support.”⁸⁷

They further explained that despite these constraints, private providers continue to play a significant role in the Island’s training landscape:

“For the past ten years we have worked closely with industry and we deliver a significant proportion of apprenticeships, in some cases training more learners than publicly funded institutions.”⁸⁸

These insights provided the Panel with valuable context on the pressures facing private training organisations and the importance of their contribution to meeting workforce development needs. The evidence indicates that while private providers supply an important proportion of training, they do so within a framework that differs from publicly funded institutions, especially in relation to resourcing and access to subsidised infrastructure.

The submission also highlights that private providers continue to play a meaningful role in supporting apprenticeships and industry-aligned training, despite these constraints. Overall, this information highlights the structural factors shaping the private sector provision and offers context for understanding how different parts of the training system contribute to meeting workforce and learner needs in Jersey.

During the public hearing with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, the Panel raised questions regarding the engagement with industry to incentivise continued professional development, upskilling and reskilling.

“The Connétable of Grouville: Thank you, Minister. I have got a few questions here about the vocational learning pathways. Minister, what measures has the department taken to engage with industry to incentivise continued professional development, upskilling, and reskilling? The

Minister for Sustainable Economic Development: As a department in general, we are in constant dialogue with industry across all areas of their needs. But Skills Jersey play the main role in engaging with industry to understand their skills needs. My understanding is that they have engagement via surveys, via focus groups, interviews, ongoing dialogue with sector bodies in order to understand that. But again, that is data that is collected directly via Skills Jersey. I think the Employment Forum ... no, there is a Jersey Employers Group, which I think feed into that as well. But the data collecting part of it is done by Skills Jersey. What we do in our department is maintain a constant dialogue with industries, and where I hear of industries who are having issues around training, finding staff members, things like this, I will feed that, and I know my officers will feed that to Skills Jersey so they understand that.”⁸⁹

The Minister’s response indicates that Skills Jersey is the primary body responsible for collecting data and engaging systematically with employers to understand skills needs, using methods such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and ongoing dialogue with industry. The Minister also highlighted that the Department maintains informal channels of communication with industries and relays their feedback to Skills Jersey.

This suggests that while mechanisms for employer engagement do exist, activity appears to be distributed across multiple bodies, with Skills Jersey holding responsibility for evidence gathering and

⁸⁷ [Written Submission – Neon Salon and School, 21 December 2025](#)

⁸⁸ [Written Submission – Neon Salon and School, 21 December 2025](#)

⁸⁹ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p.11

the Department for the Economy relying on industry feedback received through routine interactions. The Panel considered this useful context for understanding how industry views are incorporated into skills planning, and how concerns relating to upskilling, reskilling, and professional development are currently escalated within the system.

Further, the Panel sought to understand the breadth of financial and operational support currently available to employers to encourage investment in upskilling, professional development, and workforce training. This topic was explored during the public hearing with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. During the hearing, the Panel asked the Minister what specific support was offered to employers to incentivise continued professional development. In response, the Minister highlighted that, aside from apprenticeship funding, the principal form of support available was the *Better Business Support Package*, a scheme amounting to £1.5 million in total, which included grants of up to £2,000 for eligible businesses⁹⁰.

The Minister noted that beyond this scheme and the existing apprenticeship support administered by Skills Jersey, he was not aware of additional financial incentives available specifically for employer-led training or general upskilling initiatives:

“The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development: From our side there is only, to my understanding, the Better Business Support Package, that £2,000, or the £1.5 million broken up. Outside of that, except for apprenticeships, I do not know if there is that much more available. Skills Jersey have money available for apprenticeships, I do not know if they have money available for general training.”⁹¹

The Chief Economic Adviser provided further detail, emphasising that existing schemes are generally targeted at programme-level training rather than direct employer support:

“There is the Skills Development Scheme, but that tends to go towards a programme training approach of the course, as opposed to businesses per se.”⁹²

He also highlighted that direct grants to businesses for training are not typically part of Jersey’s economic development approach: and further noted that while similar schemes have been used in other jurisdictions, they tend to be cyclical and often short-lived. He added that the UK did not currently have such programmes: He concluded by clarifying that the Better Business Support Package introduced ‘very specifically to sit alongside the living wage’. He explained that ‘it is a 2-year programme because it was a 2-year uplift effectively, to give businesses in that time to adapt.’ The hearing explained that while apprenticeships and targeted schemes exist, there is limited direct financial or operational support available to employers seeking to invest in wider continued professional development.

During the hearing, the Chief Economic Adviser also provided further clarification on the purpose and performance of the Better Business Support Package. He explained:

“How the Better Business Support Package really came about was to very much target that increased investment across all the areas that would be productivity driven. Investment, if you want to just use that one term, is very low on the Island... That is what we are seeking to do, which is why we have the match funding which is 50:50. We are aiming not to just fill a gap

⁹⁰ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p. 12

⁹¹ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p.12

⁹² [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p.12

*but with a subsidy is to encourage businesses to get into the habit of investing in themselves a lot more.*⁹³

In summarising this evidence, the Chief Economic Adviser indicated that while the package had been effective in supporting productivity-focused investment, its impact on skills development had been limited.

*“The productivity side of it has worked very well, and we have discussed that over the last few months. The skills side maybe not so much and we need to look at that again for the next year just to see how we might re-incentivise that. Coming back to your exact question, it feels like the productivity side of subsidy, if you want to call it that, is about at the right level. We have attracted the right number of companies and we have been able to get the money out the door quite effectively. The skills, maybe we need to look at it a bit differently, 50:50 has not quite worked; maybe we need to look at higher levels.”*⁹⁴

The Chief Economic Adviser concluded:

*“I do not believe we have got the Better Business Support skills element quite right yet for what is the right level of subsidy.”*⁹⁵

He noted that the current 50:50 match-funding model may not be suitable for training-related applications and that adjustments, such as higher subsidy levels or allowing businesses to apply for multiple training activities in bulk, may be needed. Overall, he acknowledged that the skills component of the scheme had not yet achieved the intended outcomes and required reconsideration in future programme design. The Panel then sought clarification on whether this meant that the productivity and skills elements of the scheme might need to be separated. In response, the Chief Economic Adviser explained that this was not necessarily the intention, but that the skills component required reconsideration. He stated:

*“I think we just need to look at the skills element again for 2026... and see if we can re-tailor it slightly to do what it was aimed to do still, but with a slightly different set of parameters that encourages businesses to invest.”*⁹⁶

The Panel learnt that there had been limited success with the skills-funding element of the Better Business Support Package and that options for redesigning it were actively being considered for 2026. The Panel found that the skills component, as currently structured, had not sufficiently incentivised employer investment and required further review to improve its effectiveness. The design of the Better Business Support Package appears limited in its approach to skills development and can be understood through the lens of what Professor Boeren describes as a *restrictive learning climate*.⁹⁷ As she notes, most non-formal training occurs in the workplace, placing employers at the centre of meso-level skills development. In restrictive climates, employers tend to invest only in training that is directly relevant to immediate job tasks, often due to budget constraints, time pressures, or concerns about staff being poached by competitors. This contrasts with *expansive learning climates*, where

⁹³ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p.13

⁹⁴ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p. 13

⁹⁵ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p. 13

⁹⁶ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p. 13

⁹⁷ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026

employers adopt a broader approach to skills investment that supports staff morale, well-being, adaptability and soft-skills development. Professor Boeren's work highlights that small and medium-sized enterprises are more likely to operate within restrictive learning climates because of their limited resources, whereas larger firms are more able to sustain expansive approaches through dedicated HR and training functions.⁹⁸ Viewed in this context, the Better Business Support Package reflects the characteristics of a restrictive learning climate, offering limited incentives for employers to engage more broadly in skills development. By contrast, an expansive learning climate would place the learner at the centre, by prioritising their wider skills acquisition, future development, and long-term growth.

Furthermore, during the hearing the Panel asked the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development to confirm whether the Better Business Support Package would be ending at the end of 2026. The Minister confirmed the Package was ending on 31 December 2026. The Minister expressed concerns about the ending of the Package:

*"Minister for Sustainable Economic Development: I would be concerned once that support disappears that that would be a £2,000 loss, for want of a better word, to any employer seeking to take on an apprentice. With that money gone, that may take away the incentive to employ them. It would solely be the Education Department's money then being used to support apprenticeships."*⁹⁹

This is significant because it indicates that the withdrawal of the Better Business Support Package may have direct consequences for employer participation in apprenticeships. The Minister's comments suggest that the £2,000 support payment has been functioning as an important financial incentive for businesses, particularly smaller employers, to take on apprentices. With the Package ending on 31 December 2026, the financial responsibility for supporting apprenticeships would fall entirely to the Education Department, potentially reducing the attractiveness of apprenticeship recruitment for employers.

The Panel learned that this change could affect the overall sustainability of Jersey's apprenticeship model, especially in sectors already experiencing recruitment pressures or low apprenticeship uptake. It also raises questions about whether alternative incentives or supportive measures will be introduced to prevent a decline in employer engagement once the current scheme ends.

Following the public hearing, the Panel wrote to the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development with questions regarding reskilling and upskilling demand.¹⁰⁰ The Panel asked how many workers are currently identified as requiring reskilling or upskilling to meet future economic needs, which sectors show the highest demand, and what numbers are available to illustrate this. The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development responded *'it is not an appropriate role of Government to dictate to industry which sectors require upskilling or to pick winners or losers.'*¹⁰¹ Instead, he commented that the Government's role is to provide a flexible framework that enables businesses across all sectors to upskill their workforce at the point that is most appropriate for them. He noted that while broad future skills needs, such as those relating to artificial intelligence or green technology are understood, the timing and scale of demand for these skills should be determined by businesses and

⁹⁸ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026

⁹⁹ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p.3

¹⁰⁰ [Letter from the Chair of the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel to the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 19 December 2025](#)

¹⁰¹ [Letter from the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 29 January 2026](#)

the wider market. As a result, the Panel has learned that the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development does not consider the identification of sector-specific reskilling or upskilling needs to fall within Government's remit, raising questions about where responsibility for assessing future workforce requirements sits and how this aligns with wider economic and skills-planning activity.

Finding 17: Private providers meet recognised standards but face resourcing challenges. Operating without subsidies or structured support constrains sustainability and growth.

Finding 18: Employer engagement is distributed across multiple bodies rather than centrally coordinated. This diffuses data gathering and can delay coherent system-level responses.

Finding 19: Direct financial support for employer-led training is limited beyond apprenticeships. Existing schemes tend to fund programmes rather than employer-specific upskilling.

Recommendation 10: The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development should review and reform apprenticeship subsidy structures, including subsidy levels, eligibility and duration, to prioritise workforce shortage sectors, adopting new rules and increasing starts in shortage sectors by at least 15% within 12 months while maintaining employer satisfaction at or above 75%, following a review in Q3 2026 and implementation in Q4 2026.

Recommendation 11: Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and Skills Jersey should define priority sectors and skills and adjust local vocational pathways accordingly, approving a priority list by Q3 2026 and protecting or expanding at least five pathways by Q1 2027, with an annual alignment check thereafter.

Recommendation 12: CYPES and Skills Jersey should mandate standardised data returns from all learners and all providers (including private) into a single database covering participation, demographics, progression and outcomes, achieving 90% provider compliance with quarterly public dashboards and embedded gap reporting, with the framework in place by Q3 2026 and the first dashboard by Q4 2026.

Recommendation 13: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, should simplify and consolidate lifelong learning funding into a single, clear set of eligibility rules and entitlements supported by a public guide and calculator, completing policy consolidation and publishing guidance to achieve an 80% user satisfaction rate, following consultation in Q3 2026 and live in Q4 2026.

Recommendation 14: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development should establish a sustainable funding model for private providers delivering apprenticeships and training in shortage sectors, agreeing a new model that secures at least 80% provider confidence and prevents any net loss of places in shortage areas, with review in Q3 2026 and implementation in Q1 2027.

3. Effectiveness, Accessibility, and Inclusivity

Strengths and weaknesses of current provision

The Panel sought to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current provision of lifelong vocational learning in Jersey. As part of this work, the Panel wrote to a wide range of stakeholders across key sectors and asked:

“In your view, are there adequate opportunities for lifelong vocational learning in Jersey?”

This question was designed to gather perspectives on how effectively the Island supports individuals to develop skills throughout their careers, including opportunities to upskill, retrain, or pursue continued professional development. By drawing on stakeholder insights, the Panel aimed to identify both areas of good practice and any gaps or challenges within the existing system. The evidence received informed the Panel’s analysis of the overall strengths and weaknesses of Jersey’s lifelong vocational learning landscape.

The Panel received 10 submissions that explicitly addressed this question. Stakeholders broadly agreed that Jersey has established strengths at entry level and within apprenticeship pathways, particularly at Levels 2 and 3. Evidence from stakeholders highlighted that these foundations are supported by strong employer-provider partnerships and high-quality teaching in several vocational departments. For example, Jersey Finance noted that the Island benefits from an established framework for school leavers, including apprenticeships and employer-sponsored qualifications, which effectively support early-career entrants.¹⁰² NEON Salon and School similarly recognised a “core level of provision” across key sectors such as construction, hospitality, health and social care, and hair and beauty.¹⁰³ Toni & Guy Jersey also acknowledged that vocational opportunities do exist within this framework.¹⁰⁴

However, submissions consistently indicated that opportunities for adult learners wishing to upskill, retrain, or progress beyond Level 3 are limited. NEON Salon and School identified barriers including funding that prioritises initial training over adult upskilling, unclear progression routes beyond Level 3, and constraints arising from the Island’s size.¹⁰⁵ An anonymous submission likewise praised the strength of Level 2 and 3 apprenticeships but noted that Jersey lacks higher-level vocational courses and structured progression opportunities beyond degree level, despite persistent skills shortages in areas such as construction, engineering, and technical disciplines¹⁰⁶.

Overall, the evidence suggests that while Jersey’s vocational system performs well in supporting young people and those entering the workforce, it falls short in providing flexible, accessible and coherent pathways for adult learners. Gaps in higher-level provision, unclear progression routes, and funding structures that favour initial qualifications over lifelong learning hinder the development of a comprehensive vocational learning ecosystem. This points to a systemic gap between strong early-career provision and the needs of a modern workforce that requires continuous upskilling, reinforcing the need for a more integrated and accessible lifelong learning offer.

Analysis of the submissions revealed three overarching weaknesses within Jersey’s existing lifelong vocational learning system. Stakeholders consistently pointed to challenges related to funding, infrastructure, and wider system-level arrangements, all of which constrain the accessibility, coherence and long-term sustainability of vocational learning opportunities for adult learners.

Finding 20: Vocational routes at Levels 2–3 for young entrants are well-established and perform strongly. These pathways are a reliable entry point into work.

Finding 21: Progression beyond Level 3 is often unclear, with gaps at higher technical and degree levels. Limited local pathways constrain advanced skills development.

¹⁰² [Written Submission - Jersey Finance, 08 January 2026](#)

¹⁰³ [Written Submission – Neon Salon and School, 21 December 2025](#)

¹⁰⁴ [Written Submission – Toni & Guy Jersey, 06 January 2026](#)

¹⁰⁵ [Written Submission – Neon Salon and School, 21 December 2025](#)

¹⁰⁶ [Written Submission – Anonymous 1, 22 December 2025](#)

Funding:

Firstly, the issues with funding and affordability were highlighted as a key factor with the provision of lifelong vocational learning in Jersey. Highlands College reported strong demand for adult learning, with between 450 and 500 adult learners enrolled annually on professional courses to upskill and meet employer needs. Despite the high quality of teaching, with satisfaction rate at 94% and 92% for teaching and learning, the Principal of Highlands acknowledged that “access is necessarily limited by cost”¹⁰⁷. The Principal explained that “many programmes in lifelong learning do not attract statutory funding”. While staffing is covered, “teaching and delivery costs are not, requiring [Highlands] to charge employers and individuals”, therefore necessitating a cost for accessing courses. Therefore, the cost at point of access for courses in Jersey has a practical effect in Jersey with reduced affordability for mid-career learners and career switches, thus constraining participation and slowing employer upskilling. The Panel learnt that the upfront cost of adult learning is a significant weakness for the provision of lifelong vocational learning in Jersey, in comparison to other jurisdictions. For further detail regarding comparison to other jurisdictions see Section 4.

The demand for mid-career and career switches was reinforced in the submission from Jersey Finance:

*“as the nature of work evolves and career paths become less linear, the importance of lifelong vocational learning is increasing. This includes opportunities for mid-career reskilling, adult learning, and upskilling in response to technological change.”*¹⁰⁸

While Jersey Finance acknowledged that elements of this provision exist, they caveated that they “are not always well signposted, consistently funded, or sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of learners at all stages of life.”¹⁰⁹ Therefore, the Panel has learned that there is demand for mid-career reskilling, upskilling and adult learning, however there are financial barriers to access.

Following the public hearing, the Panel sought clarity from the Minister on the practical next steps arising from the Apprenticeship Funding Review, particularly in relation to simplifying access and improving user experience for learners and employers. In his response, the Minister acknowledged that the Skills Jersey webpage presently sets out funding pathways (including the Level 2 - 3 subsidy), the Minister confirmed that clearer and more comprehensive guidance will be developed in 2026 as part of the next phase of policy work. Additionally, the Panel asked the Minister to confirm the timeframe that has been set for the next steps from the Apprenticeship Funding Review. The Minister explained that officers have been tasked to develop options for a new, more generous funding scheme. The Minister commented that any expansion in support will require approval under the next government's budget process. As a result, the earliest implementation date is in 2027, subject to approval¹¹⁰.

Furthermore, in their letters to the stakeholders the Panel asked, “*how effectively do you think lifelong vocational learning in Jersey is funded to support career changes, upskilling, and workforce development?*” Stakeholders consistently reported that current funding arrangements are uneven, insufficient, and poorly aligned with the needs of adult learners, providers, and sectors facing acute skills shortages. Highlands College provided detailed evidence illustrating the financial pressure faced by the Island's central vocational provider. The College is required to meet an annual income target

¹⁰⁷ [Written Submission – Highlands College, 14 January 2026](#)

¹⁰⁸ [Written Submission – Jersey Finance, 08 January 2026](#)

¹⁰⁹ [Written Submission – Jersey Finance, 08 January 2026](#)

¹¹⁰ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 23 January 2026](#)

of £3.84 million, the majority of which, £3.37 million, must be generated through course fee income¹¹¹. To balance its budget, the College rents out teaching space, and even then, provision for higher-level learners is constrained, with limited facilities such as the absence of a dedicated lecture theatre for degree-level students¹¹². Highlands College further highlighted that apprenticeship grants (£1,800 per apprentice) fall far below the real cost of delivery, averaging £4,630, creating a funding gap that providers must absorb¹¹³. They also noted the absence of a statutory entitlement to post-16 vocational education, as well as unmet demand for adult literacy and numeracy programmes that cannot be offered free of charge due to lack of dedicated funding.

Other sectors echoed concerns about the limited availability and uneven distribution of funds. Jersey Finance observed that while employers in the financial and professional services sector invest heavily in staff development, individuals seeking to reskill independently, particularly mid-career workers, part-time staff, or those with caring responsibilities, receive limited financial support¹¹⁴. Jersey Finance highlighted that funding is often tied to structured apprenticeships or employer-linked grants, creating barriers for adults pursuing alternative or non-traditional pathways¹¹⁵. Several submissions highlighted that funding structures directly discourage career changes, for example, in their submission Toni & Guy Jersey stressed that adult learners retraining in hairdressing must typically do so on an apprenticeship wage or minimum wage, making career transition financially unviable for many people with mortgages, families, or other commitments.¹¹⁶

Submissions from NEON Salon and School and Autism Jersey further highlighted the lack of accessible funding for adults seeking to retrain, upskill, or re-enter the workforce¹¹⁷. NEON Salon and School noted that mid-career learners often self-fund substantial training costs, while Autism Jersey reported that funding pathways for autistic adults are unclear, difficult to navigate, and fail to support needs such as job-coaching or training access¹¹⁸. Anonymous submissions also pointed to inconsistencies across vocational pathways and inadequate funding for Level 2 and 3 programmes, which undermines progression into higher-level learning.

The Panel received a significant body of evidence which demonstrates that funding arrangements for lifelong vocational learning in Jersey are fragmented, unevenly distributed, and disproportionately focused on early-career training. These gaps reduce access to lifelong upskilling opportunities, create barriers to career change, limit the capacity of providers, and contribute to ongoing skills shortages. Stakeholders emphasised that more coherent, equitable and strategically targeted funding mechanisms are needed to build a workforce capable of adapting to economic change throughout the lifespan.

The Panel also received written evidence highlighting how current Government schemes restrict the ability of sole traders and small business owners to offer vocational learning opportunities. A submission from *The Repair Shop* drew attention to the difficulties experienced by long-established sole traders seeking to participate in programmes such as the Trident work experience scheme. The submission stated:

“The first stumbling block for small business owners and sole traders is very apparent when Gov.je do not allow them to even register on the Trident scheme. Why? There is no option for

¹¹¹ [Written Submission – Highlands College, 14 January 2026](#)

¹¹² [Written Submission – Highlands College, 14 January 2026](#)

¹¹³ [Written Submission – Highlands College, 14 January 2026](#)

¹¹⁴ [Written Submission – Jersey Finance, 08 January 2026](#)

¹¹⁵ [Written Submission – Jersey Finance, 08 January 2026](#)

¹¹⁶ [Written Submission – Toni & Guy Jersey, 06 January 2026](#)

¹¹⁷ [Written Submission – Autism Jersey, 30 December 2025](#)

¹¹⁸ [Written Submission – Neon Salon and School, 21 December 2025](#)

these businesses to apply for any support or grants, which to me, as a sole trader for over forty years, can offer experience and expertise in my particular field of electro-mechanical engineering. This is very short sighted.”¹¹⁹

This evidence reinforced the Panel's finding that structural barriers exist which prevent sole traders and one-person businesses from accessing financial support or grants intended to promote lifelong vocational learning. Despite their capacity to provide specialised training, mentorship, and hands-on learning opportunities within niche industries, these businesses are effectively excluded from contributing to vocational development schemes due to restrictive eligibility criteria and the absence of accessible funding pathways.

The Panel noted that this exclusion not only limits opportunities for learners, particularly those seeking practical, community-based placements, but also restricts the potential for skills development within small, niche sectors where sole traders possess unique expertise. The submission from *The Repair Shop* exemplified how systems do not currently support, incentivise, or even enable sole traders to participate in or host vocational learning programmes, despite their willingness and capability to do so.

Similarly, the Jersey Construction Council noted that the Better Business Support Package excluded self-employed individuals, leaving a significant proportion of the construction workforce unable to access funding for upskilling¹²⁰. This point was raised to the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. During the public hearing, the Panel sought to clarify the eligibility criteria for the Better Business Support Package, specifically whether the scheme is available to self-employed individuals and sole employers. When asked what financial incentives or grants were currently available to support lifelong vocational learning and workforce upskilling, the Chair of the Panel asked specifically about “companies, sole trader, self-employed”¹²¹. The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development stated that the Better Business Support Package was “available to all businesses” and confirmed that this included “companies, sole trader, self-employed.”¹²² He then added that the package was designed to support “anyone who employs someone” and described it as being aimed at all types of organisations, including charities, with apprenticeship funding also available at a rate of £2,000 per employee¹²³.

However, later in the hearing the Government's Chief Economic Adviser provided a clarification that appeared to narrow the eligibility criteria. He explained that although sole traders were referenced earlier, the scheme is linked to the living wage requirement and “the company had to employ at least one person” in order to qualify. This means that a sole trader who does not employ any staff would not meet the criteria to access the Better Business Support Package.

This exchange highlighted a lack of clarity and shared understanding regarding the eligibility rules, which mirrors the sentiment expressed in submissions to the Panel. While the Minister's comments suggested broad availability, including for self-employed individuals and sole traders regardless of workforce size, the subsequent clarification indicated that only organisations employing at least one person are eligible. As a result, the Panel found that public messaging and policy communication around the scheme's scope and intended beneficiaries requires greater consistency to avoid

¹¹⁹ [Written Submission – The Repair Shop, 12 December 2025](#)

¹²⁰ [Written Submission – Jersey Construction Council, 21 January 2026](#)

¹²¹ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#)

¹²² [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#)

¹²³ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#)

confusion for self-employed people, one-person enterprises, and other small operators seeking support for upskilling and vocational learning.

The Panel noted that they believed that a significant proportion of businesses operating in Jersey are sole-person enterprises or sole employers. Given this structure, the Panel expressed concern that these businesses are currently excluded from accessing elements of the Better Business Support Package, including support that could assist them in taking on apprentices or trainees. Stakeholder submissions suggested that this exclusion disproportionately affects precisely those small operators who may benefit most from financial assistance when making their first hire.

During the hearing, the Connétable of Grouville raised this issue directly, asking the Minister to clarify whether self-employed people and sole traders were eligible for the scheme, and whether consideration had been given to extending support to these groups. In response, the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development stated unequivocally that *“sole traders and self-employed, lone-employed people are not eligible for the Better Business Support Package”*, noting that only one element of the package could apply, and confirming that *“we have not considered extending it to them... and we are not planning to.”*¹²⁴ The Minister explained that the package had been designed specifically to mitigate the financial impact of the minimum wage increasing toward the living wage, and therefore applied only to employers who were paying wages: *“If you are not employing someone you are not having to cope with a sudden increase in the minimum wage... that is why.”* He further emphasised that the package is funded through the Social Security Fund and is therefore linked directly to employment.

Members of the Panel challenged this position. Deputy Tadier highlighted that one of the most significant decisions faced by small operators is whether to take on a first employee and argued that support targeted at sole traders could directly encourage new employment. He suggested that enabling sole-person businesses to access upskilling or apprenticeship support could unlock new workforce participation and productivity gains. The Minister acknowledged that *“it possibly could be... something worth looking at,”* referencing his own experience as a one-person business and the challenges involved in deciding whether to hire a first employee.

Overall, the Panel concluded that the current design of the Better Business Support Package inadvertently excludes a substantial segment of Jersey’s business community, despite their potential to contribute to workforce development and apprenticeship growth. The absence of support for sole traders and self-employed individuals limits opportunities for them to transition into employers and therefore restricts the potential expansion of apprenticeship and trainee placements within the Island’s economy.

Finding 22: The skills element of the Better Business Support Package under-performed under a 50:50 match model. The programme ends on 31 December 2026, prompting the need for redesign to improve uptake.

Finding 23: Eligibility for the Better Business Support Package lacks clarity among stakeholders.

Finding 24: Sole traders without staff are excluded from the Better Business Support Package due to wage-linked criteria. No support exists for sole-person businesses to hire their first employee, apprentice, or trainee. This creates a structural barrier to expanding training capacity in the economy and passing on skills in more niche sectors.

¹²⁴[Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#)

Recommendation 15: The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, should assess and redesign the Better Business Support Package skills element to align with employer needs, allow multi-activity applications, increase subsidies where justified, include sole traders and first hires, and embed monitoring and evaluation, publishing an assessment and new KPIs and achieving at least 20% more funded training actions and a minimum of 15% more first-hire/trainee/apprentice cases, with assessment in Q3 2026, redesign in Q4 2026 and relaunch in Q1 2027 if results aren't achieved.

Infrastructure and physical learning environments:

The review identified infrastructure and physical learning environments as a notable weakness within Jersey's lifelong vocational learning offer. Stakeholders pointed to two recurring issues: the outdated Highlands College estate and the absence of a centralised, shared hub for providers. Together, these factors were seen to constrain quality, capacity, and learner uptake. Highlands College reported that, while its programmes align with local sector demand.

*"the estate and resources to support learning are outdated. They do not provide industry standard environments as recommended in the Martin Doel 'Actionable Agenda' (2022) and fail to inspire or motivate people to commit to a vocational educational pathway."*¹²⁵

Similarly, in their submission the Jersey Construction Council questioned whether the current campus could expand or modernise at the pace required:

*"Does the Campus have the room to expand or the funding to modernize its facilities to deliver training?"*¹²⁶

These submissions indicate that the current existing vocational learning infrastructure presents challenges for curriculum delivery, accessibility, course development, and access to modern technology and equipment. Moreover, JICAS argued that highlighted the lack of a centralised facility to bring together providers and learners at scale, noting that *"the lack of centralisation of provision on island prevents the gathering of expertise and economies of scale"* and commented that *"a localised physical space would go a long way to ensure that we harness the full potential for islanders looking to upskill and gain new opportunities."*¹²⁷ Stakeholders suggested that a shared hub could improve coordination, visibility, and efficiency across the system.

Overall, this evidence suggests that the current estate limits exposure to industry-standard equipment and practice, thus reducing credibility and learner motivation, limiting responsiveness to employer needs, and, the lack of a central shared hub, prevents coordination and economies of scale that could make lifelong learning more accessible, efficient, and visible to learners and businesses. Therefore, the Panel finds that the current infrastructure presents a significant constraint on lifelong vocational learning in Jersey and on Highlands College's capacity to expand, modernise, and remain responsive to the Island's skills needs.

¹²⁵ [Written Submission – Highlands College and University College Jersey, 14 January 2026](#)

¹²⁶ [Written Submission – Jersey Construction Council, 21 January 2026](#)

¹²⁷ [Written Submission, JICAS, 16 December 2025](#)

Finding 25: The Highlands College estate is outdated and constrains industry-standard delivery. Facilities limit access to modern equipment and limit the range of courses. The estate presents significant barriers for accessibility and inclusivity.

Finding 26: The absence of a shared lifelong-learning hub reduces coordination and visibility. A central hub could enable collaboration, signposting, and economies of scale.

Recommendation 16: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, with Highlands College, should commission a feasibility study and masterplan for a modern Highlands College campus as a lifelong learning hub with industry-standard facilities, producing costed options and securing industry validation across at least six sectors by Q4 2026 and a preferred option decision by Q2 2027.

System-level design and progression pathways:

In their responses to the question *“In your view, are there adequate opportunities for lifelong vocational learning in Jersey?”*, stakeholders expressed significant concerns regarding the overarching design of the Island’s lifelong learning system and the limited, often fragmented, progression pathways available to learners. A recurring theme across submissions was that provision has evolved in a piecemeal manner, resulting in a lack of coherence across institutions and programmes. Highlands College highlighted the absence of an integrated tertiary education model that effectively combines academic and vocational routes. They observed that “the best performing Further Education Colleges in the U.K. are often tertiary... [but] this is not currently an option” for Jersey.¹²⁸ The submission from JICAS echoed these concerns, noting that while there is some strong provision available, it is “scattered amongst several institutions,” with no central coordination or attempt to create economies of scale¹²⁹. With more than a dozen organisations offering lifelong learning opportunities, including over six degree-awarding bodies, JICAS highlighted that “none of them share an accrediting partner,” making it more difficult for learners to navigate available options or understand their purpose¹³⁰.

Submissions highlighted that there is some good practice in partnerships between providers, however these are institution-led, and are not system-wide. In their submission, Highlands College recognised that strong partnerships exist, such as the joint post-16 Design Engineer Construct course delivered with Hautlieu, however, they caveated that these arrangements are “not system led, rather... driven by the local leadership of the institution.”¹³¹ This reliance on individual institutional initiative, rather than coordinated planning, was viewed as a constraint on the development of a consistent and scalable lifelong learning framework. An anonymous submission also observed that higher-level apprenticeships remain limited, and that progression frameworks “are often fragmented,” hindering advancement within vocational pathways¹³². Overall, these submissions highlight that there are limitations at the system level design which creates uneven learning pathways, restricts progression beyond initial qualifications, and reduces Jersey’s ability to respond effectively to evolving labour market needs.

The Panel noted that concerns about progression pathways at key transition points were a recurring theme in stakeholder submissions, highlighting a significant issue for lifelong learning in Jersey. The

¹²⁸ [Written Submission – Highlands College and University College Jersey, 14 January 2026](#)

¹²⁹ [Written Submission – JICAS, 16 December 2025](#)

¹³⁰ [Written Submission – JICAS, 16 December 2025](#)

¹³¹ [Written Submission – Highlands College and University College Jersey, 14 January 2026](#)

¹³² [Written Submission, Anonymous 1, 22 December 2025](#)

Panel highlighted that the Apprenticeship Funding: Stakeholder Perspectives Report found ‘Many expressed concern that restrictions on prior qualifications that prevent funding for more than one qualification at the same level risked closing off a key entry point into apprenticeships’¹³³ The Report also listed ‘Examine the policy of limiting funding to one qualification at a particular level, considering its impact on those seeking to retrain and fill vacancies in priority sectors’ as one of the next steps in policy development.

Submissions also emphasised that structural barriers are particularly pronounced at key transition points for adult learners. Highlands College reported that “post-19 learners face significant barriers, including lack of funding for career changes and Access to Higher Education courses,” and that individuals with an existing degree, irrespective of where it was originally funded, “cannot access Student Finance.”¹³⁴ This was seen to restrict the ability of capable adult learners to retrain for new careers and to create risks for the “future sustainability of some degrees on island.” The Panel raised this issue at the public hearing and asked the following:

“The Connétable of Grouville: Minister, the apprenticeship funding review highlighted stakeholder concerns that restrictions on prior qualifications prevented funding for more than one qualification at the same level, closing off the key entry point into apprenticeships, particularly to those seeking career changes, as we have just highlighted. Do you intend to remove this restriction and what steps are being taken to ensure that apprenticeship funding supports career changes as well as school leavers?”

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning: Do you want to talk about the specific what we have done there and then I will sum it up?

Policy Officer: That restriction does not apply to level 2, level 3 apprenticeships. It was a question to the stakeholders: “Would that be an appropriate restriction to put in place in a new scheme? If not, why not? What are the problems that you would envisage?” That was exactly the problem that they envisaged if we introduced that restriction. It exists for higher education, which is typically degrees. If somebody already has a degree, they are not eligible to access funding for a second degree, but the funding for a level 2, level 3 apprenticeships is your first apprenticeship. If somebody had, for example, an A-level, a level 3 qualification, currently they are able to apply to do a level 2 and/or a level 3 apprenticeship and access the subsidy. That restriction does not exist currently. We were testing to see if it would be appropriate to introduce it at the lower level.”¹³⁵

During the Public Hearing, the Policy Officer clarified that the restriction does not apply to Level 2 and Level 3 apprenticeships, however the restriction does apply for higher education (degrees). The Panel identified a lack of clarity surrounding the funding arrangements and the restrictions for both apprenticeships and higher education. It concluded that the existence of separate funding systems, characterised by complexity, inconsistent communication, and difficulties in navigation, serves to reinforce the perceived divide between ‘academic’ and ‘vocational’ pathways.

Further concerns were raised by Highlands College in their submission regarding the experience of families relocating to Jersey. Under current regulations, “parents who move to Jersey to work cannot access funded post-16 education unless transferring from Year 11,¹³⁶” a situation that may deter skilled workers from settling on the Island. The College notes that resolving this issue would not only support fairness for incoming families but also strengthen Jersey’s attractiveness as a destination for long-term settlement. Allowing newly arrived students equitable access to funded post-16 pathways

¹³³ [Apprenticeship Funding: Stakeholder Perspectives Summary Report – Cabinet Office, January 2026](#), p.14

¹³⁴ [Written Submission – Highlands College and University College Jersey, 14 January 2026](#)

¹³⁵ [Transcript, Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Public Hearing, Witness Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 08 January 2026](#), p.19

¹³⁶ [Written Submission – Highlands College and University College Jersey, 14 January 2026](#)

would help ensure smoother transitions, reduce potential disruption to learners, and align Jersey more closely with the practices of comparable jurisdictions seeking to grow their workforce.

Although the issue fell outside the initial scope of the review, the Chair used the public hearing to seek clarification from the Minister regarding the funding restrictions affecting access to higher education for individuals with prior qualifications. This line of questioning arose from concerns highlighted in the Apprenticeship Funding Report, as well as in several submissions to the Panel. The Panel considered it important to address these concerns publicly to gain a clear explanation of the policy position.

“Deputy C.D. Curtis: I think you were also thinking about at the degree level. Is there any plan to change that? Somebody might have a degree - I think we talked about this earlier - in teaching, for example, and then want to change to perhaps looking into psychology or something like that later on.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning: I notice that your teams of reference said about not being post-16 but that is certainly something we will need to look at. However, I will say we do fund with grants degrees. It does not happen everywhere and there will be a budgetary limitation because we spend a lot of money on degrees and if somebody has done their first degree and completed it, whether we would fund another second degree I think a decision has to be made longer term. It may well be that we come to specific areas of need for the Island or transferring degrees into a different area is the first stage in that. For example, if you train as a doctor ... I do not know why I said doctor. That is the worst example, actually. If you wanted to retrain to be a social worker, examples like that, we would ...

Deputy C.D. Curtis: You are already a teacher, you want to be a social worker, teacher, educational psychologist.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning: Yes, and it is something that the Island ... the Minister may then want to consider taking.”¹³⁷

Furthermore, the Minister’s comments confirmed that restrictions do exist on funding additional degrees for individuals who already hold a higher-education qualification. This acknowledgement directly supports several of the concerns raised in public submissions to the Panel and referenced earlier. In particular, stakeholders highlighted that the current policy limits opportunities for adults wanting to retrain into new professional areas, even where those areas align with identified workforce needs. The Panel considered this confirmation significant. It illustrates that, despite ongoing workforce pressures in sectors such as social work, the existing funding framework may act as a barrier to career transition and lifelong vocational learning. The Minister’s recognition that further policy consideration is required reinforces the Panel’s view that greater transparency, clearer eligibility criteria, and a more strategic approach to supporting retraining are essential. In their submission, Highlands suggested that targeted flexibility, such as allowing Student Finance access for career-switchers in critical shortage areas (such as social work), could help address these constraints.

Additionally, this exchange highlighted the lack of a clear and consistently communicated policy position regarding the funding of additional degrees for individuals who already hold a higher-education qualification. While the Minister acknowledged both the budgetary constraints and the potential need for flexibility in areas of workforce shortage, the response demonstrated that the current approach is determined largely on a case-by-case basis. This ties to the submission from Professor Dyke, who suggested ‘simplifying the apprenticeship system, including funding

¹³⁷ [Transcript, Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Public Hearing, Witness Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 08 January 2026](#), p.19

mechanisms; so that funding is understood by all stakeholders.¹³⁸ This recommendation is relevant as the Review has identified that the perceived complexities of the current funding arrangements is a potential barrier for lifelong learning in Jersey.

For the Panel, this lack of clarity reinforces the concerns raised elsewhere in the review about the complexity and opacity of existing funding systems. It also underlines the risk that individuals seeking to retrain or transition into priority profession, such as social work, psychology, or other areas of identified need, may be discouraged by uncertainty surrounding their eligibility for support. The Panel therefore considers that clearer policy guidance, with transparent criteria and improved communication to the public, is essential to ensure fair access to lifelong vocational learning opportunities.

Finding 27: Funding rules are complex and difficult to navigate. Ambiguity around eligibility, pathways, and exceptions causes confusion for parents, learners, employers, and providers.

Finding 28: Restrictions on second-degree funding limit adult retraining even in shortage areas. This caps workforce mobility and slows responses to emerging needs.

Recommendation 17: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should, by December 2026, undertake a comprehensive review and redesign of funding arrangements for lifelong learning, post-16 education, and higher-education retraining. The redesigned model should:

- **Simplify and consolidate existing funding systems to ensure that eligibility criteria and entitlements are clear, consistent, and easy for learners and providers to understand.**
- **Remove barriers that currently prevent newly arrived families from accessing funded post-16 education, ensuring fair and equitable access for all residents.**
- **Introduce a retraining and upskilling funding pathway that enables individuals who already hold a degree to access support for study in priority workforce areas such as social work and other critical sectors.**

The Minister should publish the reviewed policy framework, including implementation timelines and measurable success indicators, by Q1 2027.

Awareness and visibility of vocational learning opportunities:

A further weakness highlighted across submissions, hearings and wider engagement, including feedback from the Jersey Youth Assembly, was the lack of clear signposting and awareness of lifelong vocational learning opportunities in Jersey. Stakeholders repeatedly emphasised that, although some provision exists, it is not well publicised and is often difficult for individuals, employers, and support organisations to navigate. Autism Jersey reported that many autistic adults are capable of engaging in training or work but face significant barriers due to the absence of clear pathways and the fact that information “is not routinely shared with individuals or support providers.¹³⁹” They also noted that employment and volunteering are infrequently raised as aspirations during social care interventions. Jersey Finance echoed these concerns, stating that while opportunities for adult learning, reskilling and responding to technological change do exist, “they are not always well signposted,” and identified “limited awareness of available pathways” as a common barrier¹⁴⁰. Additionally, during the public

¹³⁸ [Written Submission, Professor Martin Dyke, 10 January 2026](#)

¹³⁹ [Written Submission – Autism Jersey, 30 December 2025](#)

¹⁴⁰ [Written Submission – Jersey Finance, 8 January 2026](#)

hearing with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, the Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning commented:

“I think there is also the point that once people have an awareness - and I think we spoke about that yesterday in our discussions - it is not always clear as an adult where you can go to do a certain course and whether you can get funding and support and all of those things.”¹⁴¹

This sentiment was reinforced by the Jersey Youth Assembly, which identified the lack of centralised information and limited awareness of vocational options as a significant issue for young people¹⁴². In sum, these submissions suggest that the absence of a coherent, accessible system for communicating opportunities is undermining participation in lifelong vocational learning and limiting its potential impact across the community.

3.1 Barriers to access (financial, structural, cultural) and Inclusivity of programmes

The Panel wanted to highlight the barriers to accessing lifelong vocational learning opportunities in Jersey. As part of this inquiry, the Panel wrote to a number of stakeholders, with the question:

“How accessible and inclusive do you think lifelong vocational learning is in Jersey? a. Are there any particular groups facing barriers to participation? b. If yes, what do you think those barriers are?”

Evidence submitted to the Panel indicates that lifelong vocational learning in Jersey is not equally accessible to all groups. Stakeholders highlighted a series of financial, structural and cultural barriers that limit participation, hinder progression, and reduce the inclusivity of the lifelong learning system. Further, Professor Boeren highlighted that training costs and lack of time are typically the strongest barriers for participation.¹⁴³ While the nature and scale of these barriers vary, there was broad consensus that they disproportionately affect specific population groups, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, lower-income learners, carers, newcomers to the Island, and those wishing to retrain later in life.

Financial Barriers

Financial barriers were among the most consistently cited concerns from stakeholders. Many adult learners face significant costs when attempting to upskill or retrain, as the majority of vocational programmes require payment of fees. Highlands College noted that adults are required to pay for most courses, including English and Mathematics GCSE re-takes, including learners with severe learning difficulties¹⁴⁴. Stakeholders also highlighted the absence of high-needs funding for post-16 learners, creating additional pressures for those requiring more intensive support. Several submissions emphasised that existing funding frameworks prioritise initial education, offering limited support for adult upskilling or career changes. Individuals with a prior degree, regardless of where it was funded, are unable to access Student Finance, making reskilling prohibitively expensive.

¹⁴¹ [Transcript – Lifelong Learning Review – Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning – 8 January 2026](#), p.24

¹⁴² [Written Submission - Jersey Youth Assembly, 19 January 2026](#)

¹⁴³ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026., p.4

¹⁴⁴ [Written Submission – Highlands College, 14 January 2026](#)

NEON Salon and School similarly observed that adults returning to work or retraining face challenges due to limited funding beyond Level 3 and the absence of clear progression routes into higher-level study¹⁴⁵. Further, the submissions indicated that eligibility rules present further obstacles to accessing lifelong vocational learning in Jersey. Organisations such as Jersey Finance observed that residency requirements restrict access to certain subsidies, including apprenticeship funding¹⁴⁶. This disproportionately affects newly arrived residents and career changers relocating to the Island. Sector-specific submissions, such as from Toni & Guy Jersey, also highlighted that low training wages and extended qualification periods in fields like hairdressing create additional financial disincentives for adults wishing to enter the profession¹⁴⁷.

Structural Barriers

A second set of barriers relates to the organisation, accessibility and coordination of lifelong learning provision. A number of stakeholders referred to fragmented provision across multiple institutions, with limited central coordination or shared information systems. Jersey Finance and JICAS both commented on the lack of a centralised mechanism to signpost opportunities, which makes it difficult for learners to understand available pathways or plan their development¹⁴⁸.

Issues relating to physical accessibility were also raised. Highlands College reported significant constraints within its estate: out of 11 buildings, only four have fully compliant lifts and accessible toilets. These limitations reduce access for students with mobility impairments and require annual adjustments to timetabling to accommodate learners returning from injury or illness. Stakeholders noted that this represents a regression for students transitioning from fully accessible secondary school environments.

Further structural constraints relate to the nature and availability of provision. Limited modular, evening and part-time options reduce opportunities for adults in full-time employment or with caring responsibilities. Some submissions, including those from NEON Salon and School and U3A Jersey, also identified gaps in provision for older adults, carers and those balancing work and family responsibilities¹⁴⁹. Autism Jersey highlighted that some learners with autism face significant barriers, including inaccessible information, difficulty navigating administrative processes, and a lack of autism-informed support.¹⁵⁰

A recurring theme in the evidence was the absence of statutory entitlements for post-16 vocational education in Jersey. Highlands College emphasised this point strongly in its submission, noting that “There is no statutory entitlement for vocational education post-16.”¹⁵¹ The College referenced the NASEN review (2021), which recommended Raising the Participation Age for education in Jersey, but observed that this recommendation has not been progressed.

Highlands also drew attention to the current legal framework. The Education (Jersey) Law 1999 places a duty on the Minister to “facilitate attendance... on such a course of higher or vocational education as is appropriate to the person’s abilities and aptitudes.”¹⁵² However, the Law also provides that the Minister may charge fees for (a) education for those over compulsory school age and (b) facilities for continuing education. Highlands reported that, in practice, the absence of statutory entitlements

¹⁴⁵ [Written Submission – Neon Salon and School, 21 December 2025](#)

¹⁴⁶ [Written Submission – Jersey Finance, 8 January 2026](#)

¹⁴⁷ [Written Submission – Toni & Guy Jersey, 06 January 2026](#)

¹⁴⁸ [Written Submission – JICAS, 16 December 2025](#)

¹⁴⁹ [Written Submission – Jersey u3a, 22 December 2025](#)

¹⁵⁰ [Written Submission – Autism Jersey, 30 December 2025](#)

¹⁵¹ [Written Submission, Highlands College and University College Jersey](#), 14 January 2026

¹⁵² [Written Submission, Highlands College and University College Jersey](#), 14 January 2026

results in gaps in provision, including unmet demand for adult literacy and numeracy programmes which cannot currently be offered free of charge due to lack of funding.

The Panel raised similar concerns during its public hearing. The Connétable of Grouville asked the Minister whether, given that higher education grants are a statutory entitlement, apprenticeships should also be placed on a similar statutory footing. The Minister responded that “in the long term the answer has to be yes”, acknowledging that a statutory entitlement would need to be supported by a more coherent system for guaranteeing post-16 provision¹⁵³. He noted that Jersey currently has a mixed model, where some post-16 provision is fee-paying and some is not, and reflected that statutory guarantees would need to be accompanied by a move toward a statutory participation age up to 18. The Minister described apprenticeships and statutory entitlement as “a symbiotic relationship... one feeds on the other”, and stated that if designed correctly, such reforms would support the Island’s long-term education and skills objectives.¹⁵⁴

The Panel welcomed this statement. It considers the Minister’s recognition of the need for a statutory entitlement to be an important step towards addressing longstanding gaps in Jersey’s vocational education system. Statutory guarantees are a common feature of best-practice models internationally and within the UK. They provide predictability for learners, clarity for providers, and stability for employers planning long-term workforce development. They also help prevent inequity, ensuring that access to vocational learning is not dependent on ability to pay, an issue repeatedly raised by stakeholders throughout the review.

Introducing a statutory entitlement for apprenticeships and core elements of lifelong vocational learning would better align Jersey with comparator jurisdictions such as England and Scotland, where there are entitlement frameworks and structured funding mechanism to support sustained participation. It would also strengthen Highlands College’s ability to plan and deliver modern vocational programmes with the appropriate level of certainty and investment.

Overall, the Panel considers that moving towards statutory entitlements for vocational education and apprenticeships would help to reduce the financial barriers to accessing lifelong learning opportunities, expand access to essential upskilling and reskilling opportunities and support employer workforce needs. Additionally, the Panel believes that establishing a statutory entitlement for vocational education would help promote a culture of lifelong learning which embraces and values vocational learning. Further, the Panel considers that a more coherent, equitable vocational system is essential for future-proofing the island’s workforce. The Panel therefore believes that this area represents a critical opportunity for policy development and would deliver tangible benefits to learners, providers, and the wider economy.

Cultural Barriers

Stakeholders also flagged cultural and awareness-related factors that affect participation. A common theme was limited awareness of available learning opportunities and insufficient clarity about pathways. Without a centralised point of information, many Islanders lack understanding of how courses link to employment or progression.

Certain population groups face additional cultural or perception-based barriers. The Jersey Construction Council noted that learners with English as a second language may approach structured learning with apprehension or the belief that they will struggle. JICAS highlighted that women and

¹⁵³ [Transcript – Lifelong Learning Review – Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning – 8 January 2026](#), p.14

¹⁵⁴ [Transcript – Lifelong Learning Review – Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning – 8 January 2026](#), p.14

adults seeking to change careers often experience additional hesitancy or uncertainty in navigating opportunities¹⁵⁵. Anonymous submissions (Anonymous 1 and Anonymous 2) observed variability in inclusive teaching practices across providers; while some institutions offer strong individualised support and adaptive technologies for neurodivergent learners, provision is not consistent across the system. In some cases, this variability, combined with outdated facilities, reduces the overall inclusivity of the learning environment.

The evidence submitted to the Panel demonstrates that barriers to lifelong vocational learning in Jersey are multidimensional and often intersecting. Financial pressures, structural limitations in provision and physical accessibility, and cultural or informational barriers collectively restrict participation for several groups. These issues limit the inclusivity of the lifelong learning system and present challenges for Jersey's broader objectives relating to workforce development, skills resilience, and opportunities for career progression across the population.

3.2 Employer engagement and responsiveness to learner and workforce needs

Meeting learner needs

As part of the review, the Panel sought to assess whether the current provision of opportunities adequately meets the needs of learners. In its correspondence with stakeholders, the Panel asked for views on whether lifelong vocational learning opportunities in Jersey effectively support learners across different life and career stages. Stakeholders were also invited to identify any remaining skills shortages or sector-specific gaps that persist within the current system. The evidence from stakeholders indicates partial alignment with workforce needs, but highlights substantive gaps in sector coverage, progression pathways, mid-career retraining, and inclusion. Highlands College confirmed that the “current provision does not fully meet lifelong learning needs”¹⁵⁶. Similarly, Jersey Finance reported that opportunities are “partially meeting learners’ needs”, particularly at earlier career stages, and especially where employers co-design or co-deliver¹⁵⁷.

The submissions identified significant gaps in the provision of lifelong vocational learning in Jersey. The evidence highlighted gaps across green technologies, healthcare, hair and beauty, marine, digital skills, AI, and critical thinking skills. Firstly, Highlands College confirmed that “gaps exist in green technology, healthcare, marine, and short digital courses.” Notably, JICAS identified a substantive gap in the development of cross-cutting, transferable skills, critical thinking and analysis; cultural intelligence; research mastery; team building and problem-solving; data handling and interpretation (both qualitative and quantitative); and effective communication. This submission is significant because it shifts the lens from a narrow emphasis on strictly “vocational” competences which often dominate the discourse around lifelong learning (such as traditional trades, i.e. plumbing) to a more holistic view of lifelong learning in which transferable skills are treated as core outcomes that underpin adaptability, employability, and progression across sectors and life stages. It also highlights the need to measure the benefits of lifelong learning beyond technical qualifications, capturing growth in these transferrable skills. Furthermore, this submission highlights the need for a focus on transferable skills within the context of a rapidly evolving job market, with the growth of automation and green sectors.

The Panel notes that the ever-changing nature of the job market highlights the growing demand for transferrable, holistic skills for learners to be able to adapt and be flexible. By embedding and

¹⁵⁵ [Written Submission – JICAS, 16 December 2025](#)

¹⁵⁶ [Written Submission – Highlands College, 14 January 2026](#)

¹⁵⁷ [Written Submission – Jersey Finance, 8 January 2026](#)

evidencing these skills across programmes, rather than treating them as optional add-ons, the system would better align with learners' needs for resilience, flexibility, and sustained participation throughout their careers.

Progression pathways and mid-career training:

Several stakeholders reported a "Level 3 ceiling" that restricts learner progression. NEON Salon and School noted that after achieving Level 3, many learners must leave the Island to advance, due to limited on-island Level 4 options and funding barriers that hinder delivery even where providers are approved. Therefore, this limits learners' ability to develop specialist skills or progress in their careers without facing significant travel or relocation costs. The result is a broken pathway for motivated learners who are ready to move beyond foundational qualifications but cannot access appropriate next-step provision locally.

Stakeholders indicated that current provision is least responsive to the needs of mid-career adults seeking to retrain, change sector, or re-enter learning after time out of the workforce. Jersey Finance described support beyond early career as inconsistent and fragmented, making it difficult for adults to access well-funded, flexible, and navigable routes¹⁵⁸. Similarly, Toni & Guy Jersey highlighted the absence of accelerated or flexible pathways into hairdressing that recognise prior experience and allow adults to reach a sustainable income more quickly, an important requirement for those with financial and family responsibilities. In their submission, Highlands College referenced demographic change (an ageing population, falling birthrate) and automation risks and observed that these changes highlight the need for modular, blended provision that fits around work and caring commitments¹⁵⁹. Currently, learners report that such options are patchy and difficult to piece together into coherent upskilling journeys.

Inclusion:

Evidence from Autism Jersey indicates that adults who need structured, predictable, lower-pressure learning environments face very limited options¹⁶⁰. Many neurodivergent learners require clear information, steady pacing, and consistent support, but these features are not reliably available, posing environmental, administrative, and support-related barriers to participation and completion. Stakeholders note that universal design for learning and supported transitions are not consistently embedded across provision, potentially limiting support for learners who need adapted delivery models. Non-formal learning pathways, including those offered by U3A Jersey, can play an important role in helping adults rebuild confidence, but limited capacity continues to restrict access to these opportunities.

Overall, stakeholder evidence suggests that there is partial alignment with learners' needs, which is considered strongest at entry level. However, stakeholders point to substantive gaps in the provision where learners most need flexibility, progression, and tailored support. The submissions indicate that there are significant gaps in sectors such as green technology, healthcare and digital, alongside transferrable skills (including critical thinking, research and communication). There are substantial gaps for learners who want to progress beyond Level 2 or 3, especially due to the scarcity of funded,

¹⁵⁸ [Written Submission – Jersey Finance, 8 January 2026](#)

¹⁵⁹ [Written Submission – Highlands College, 14 January 2026](#)

¹⁶⁰ [Written Submission – Autism Jersey, 30 December 2025](#)

on-island Level 4 pathways. Stakeholders identified barriers, and gaps for learners at mid-career stage, who may want to upskill, reskill or career change. Additionally, stakeholders identified inclusion gaps for neurodivergent and other learners who may need environments with additional support.

In summary, submissions from stakeholders highlighted that the current lifelong vocational learning system was not meeting learner needs in four main ways; skills gaps, disjointed progression pathways, limited mid-career retraining, and issues with inclusion. This is significant, as in his submission to the Panel, Professor Martin Dyke, a Professor of Education with a specialist interest in Lifelong Learning at the University of Southampton, argued that *“the individual whose capabilities and skills we are seeking to develop over a lifetime should be at the centre of apprenticeship policy.”*¹⁶¹ Therefore, the gaps in the current provision indicate that the provision of lifelong learning in Jersey is not fully aligned with the needs of learners, and therefore, the policy does not centre on the experience of the learners.

Further, Professor Dyke highlighted the tensions between ‘the needs of a government labour force, the needs of employees, the needs of local employers and needs of training providers’ and argued that ‘the policy framework needs to balance these different stakeholder perspectives’.¹⁶² He provided the following example to illustrate this:

*“For example, the State of Jersey may be more aware of the need to develop a workforce with future Green Skills than a local employer who is focused on the here and now of managing their enterprise. An employee will want to have capabilities that are enduring, transferable and enable mobility between jobs. Whereas an employer may be concerned less with transferability but the specific immediate business needs of their organization. There is a need to balance these differing objectives in the design and implementation of a apprenticeship system.”*¹⁶³

This example reflects the broader point raised throughout the review: that learners need skills which are adaptable, transferable, and capable of supporting progression across their working lives. It also aligns with JICAS’ recommendation that vocational pathways should prioritise the development of core, future-focused competencies rather than narrow, employer-specific training. Ensuring that learners acquire enduring skills, such as critical thinking, digital literacy, which helps them navigate changing labour markets and move confidently between roles and industries. To achieve this, it is essential to identify learner needs early and design provision that supports long-term employability, not just immediate workforce gaps. A well-balanced apprenticeship and vocational system must therefore respond to both individual aspirations and wider strategic priorities, providing learning that equips people for life, not simply for a single job. Therefore, the Panel recommends that the needs of learners need to be recognised as central to the approach to lifelong vocational learning. Furthermore, the policy needs to balance the needs of the government labour force, the needs of employees, the needs of local employers and needs of training providers, in order to establish an apprenticeship policy which meets all their needs.

Additionally, Professor Dyke highlighted the importance of learners’ experiences in shaping policy and emphasised the central importance of learners’ lived experiences in shaping apprenticeship policy.¹⁶⁴ He noted that any effective policy framework must recognise the interplay between government intentions, employer practices, and training provider delivery, while critically ensuring that apprentices do not become “invisible” within the system. Drawing on Laurie’s work, he warned that

¹⁶¹ [Written Submission, Professor Martin Dyke, 10 January 2026](#)

¹⁶² [Written Submission, Professor Martin Dyke, 10 January 2026](#)

¹⁶³ [Written Submission, Professor Martin Dyke, 10 January 2026](#)

¹⁶⁴ [Written Submission, Professor Martin Dyke, 10 January 2026](#)

the voice and experience of the learner can become invisible within the apprenticeship system and must therefore remain central to all planning, implementation, and monitoring.¹⁶⁵ This principle directly reflects the intent of the 2012 Richards Review, which stressed that an apprenticeship is fundamentally a form of education and that “the apprentice is the key beneficiary.”¹⁶⁶ Together, these perspectives underline the need to design apprenticeship provision around learners’ real experiences, aspirations, and long-term development needs, rather than focusing predominantly on short-term labour -market requirements.

3.3 Responsiveness to workforce needs and skills gap

Responsiveness to workforce needs is critical for Jersey’s economic resilience and productivity. In order to assess stakeholders’ perspectives on this, the Panel asked whether stakeholders whether they felt lifelong vocational learning is meeting current and emerging labour market needs.

The Panel found that several submissions highlighted clear strengths within Jersey’s current lifelong vocational learning system, particularly the proactive role played by Highlands College in responding to identified skills needs. The Panel noted that the College has undertaken more than 17 curriculum developments, including the introduction of new degrees and apprenticeships, as well as a full redesign of the Jersey Progression Qualification (JPQ) across 12 pathways. However, as previously noted (see Section 3), Highlands College has limited capacity to adapt or modernise due to the physical constraints of its campus.

Submissions emphasised that these strengths are underpinned by strong employer collaboration, which helps ensure programmes remain closely aligned with labour market expectations and contributes to high learner progression rates, with 95% of students moving into employment or higher education. The Panel also heard that sector-specific initiatives are supporting skills responsiveness elsewhere in the system. In the submission from Jersey Finance, Digital Jersey was commended for its expanding portfolio of digital skills training, aimed at equipping Islanders for a rapidly evolving technological environment. Additionally, evidence submitted on the NEET programme highlighted positive outcomes, demonstrating effective support for young people transitioning into education, training, or employment. Together, these submissions indicate that while the system has limitations, there are notable areas of innovation and responsiveness that provide a strong platform for further development. Submissions also indicated that there were some sector initiatives supporting labour market needs responsiveness, such as Digital Jersey delivering digital skills courses, and effective NEET programmes with positive outcomes.

The Panel found that a number of submissions highlighted areas where Jersey’s lifelong vocational learning system is not sufficiently responsive to labour market needs. Stakeholders, such as Jersey Finance, noted the absence of any system-wide mechanism capable of identifying emerging skills requirements in real time. This lack of coordinated forecasting was viewed as a barrier to ensuring training provision keeps pace with technological, regulatory, and economic change. Submissions from employers in sectors such as hairdressing, construction, and technical trades further indicated inconsistent alignment between existing training pathways and current workforce demands. These contributors emphasised that provision often responds too slowly to evolving industry needs, resulting in skills shortages and gaps that could otherwise be mitigated through earlier or more adaptive training models.

¹⁶⁵ [Written Submission, Professor Martin Dyke, 10 January 2026](#)

¹⁶⁶ [Richard Review of Apprenticeships: main report, 2012](#), p.26

Further, the Panel asked the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development how Government intends to address emerging skills gaps in areas such as green technologies and digital transformation in order to maintain Jersey's economic competitiveness.

Deputy H.M. Miles: Can you explain how the Government intends to address emerging skills gaps in areas such as green technologies and digital transformation to maintain our economic competitiveness?

*The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development: It is not easy, and I am somewhat sceptical that Government is well-placed to do that. I remember 3 or 4 years ago there was an organisation trying to effectively sell Government a software package which could help them do that, and I was very much against it because I just did not believe that there was any software package that could future gaze and tell us what was happening. We did not take them up. It is looking into the future so it is definitely imprecise, it is definitely not a science. I believe that our best way of understanding the skills needs of the future are to be speaking to businesses. They are the ones who are best placed to know. That said, very few businesses in 2022 would have expected or known that within 12 months there would be a whole load of A.I. (artificial intelligence) products on the market and that I.T. (information technology) firms may need A.I. developers as much as regular software developers and things like this. Despite being on the front line, businesses absolutely do not have perfect foresight either and may not see something that is immediately on the horizon. But I think they are best placed to help us understand, and we do talk to them. I know Skills Jersey talks, to what we are speaking about earlier, constant contact with industry to understand what skills are needed.*¹⁶⁷

In response, the Minister explained that predicting future skills needs is inherently challenging, emphasising that such forecasting is “*imprecise*” and “*not a science*,” and expressing scepticism about the effectiveness of software-based tools previously proposed for this purpose. Instead, he stated that the Government relies primarily on ongoing engagement with businesses, which he described as being best placed to signal evolving skills requirements, while acknowledging that employers themselves do not have perfect foresight, as illustrated by the unexpectedly rapid emergence of artificial intelligence and associated changes to the job market. This exchange demonstrated to the Panel that Jersey's current approach to understanding future skills needs is largely informal and dependent on dialogue with industry rather than supported by any system-wide mechanism for skills monitoring or horizon scanning. As a result, the Panel found that the Island lacks a coordinated framework capable of anticipating emerging labour-market trends in a consistent and timely way. Drawing on this finding, the Panel recommends the development of a more systematic approach to future skills forecasting that combines industry insight with coordinated analysis across Government and training providers.

During the public hearing, the Panel asked the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development whether anyone within his department had oversight of specific industry areas to identify opportunities for economies of scale in training provision, rather than relying on individual businesses to pursue separate initiatives. The Minister confirmed that no such oversight existed within the department:

Deputy H.M. Miles: Is there anybody in your department with oversight of those particular areas of industry to search for economies of scale when it comes to training as opposed to individual businesses doing 5 or 6 different things in different places?

The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development: Not in our department.

¹⁶⁷ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p.16

*Chief Economic Adviser: No, there is a fundamental thing, just to come back to as well. I think you mentioned 2 or 3 different areas for growth in the future. The Minister I completely agree with in terms of Government is not very good at doing this and should not be doing it. I think we can say what the skills need in the future. I do not think we can say when they will be and in what demand they will be as well because we do not know how businesses are going to take off, when sectors are going to take off. Markets do not act in a linear way. You would have seen talk about A.I. for a long time, green technologies for a long time. It is only at certain periods where they go past a tipping point, where actually you do need all the skills in those areas. You need to be very prepared, but you need to be as flexible as possible. So, training people up in a certain skill area right now might not actually be pay off-able for another 5 or 10 years. It is very difficult to make that prediction. This is where Government should not necessarily be involved in flexibility of labour markets, and a really honest conversation about how we are flexible in labour markets and what skills are going to be better to import and what skills are going to be better to train Islanders up in, is going to be part of that next year or 2 where we have got to be very clear on that, I think.*¹⁶⁸

In their explanation, officials highlighted the inherent uncertainty involved in anticipating the future growth of different sectors. The Chief Economic Adviser emphasised that while Government may be able to identify broad areas where skills will likely be needed, it is far more difficult to predict *when* particular roles will become essential or at what scale.¹⁶⁹ He noted that markets do not evolve in a linear way and that technologies such as artificial intelligence and green innovations often trigger sudden, high-demand tipping points after long periods of gradual development. As a result, training extensively in specific skill areas too early may not yield benefits for several years, while training too late risks leaving the Island unprepared.

This exchange demonstrated to the Panel that Government currently avoids direct involvement in predicting or coordinating specialist skills development and does not maintain structured oversight to identify efficiencies across sectors. Instead, the approach relies heavily on labour-market flexibility and ongoing dialogue with businesses to determine which skills should be developed locally and which may need to be imported. The Chief Economic Adviser stressed that having an open and honest discussion about these choices will be essential in the coming years.

From this, the Panel found that the absence of a central mechanism for identifying shared training needs or coordinating provision across industries limits the Island's ability to plan proactively for emerging skills demands. Rather than enabling shared pathways, the responsibility currently sits with individual employers, leading to fragmentation and missed opportunities to scale-up initiatives. Drawing on this finding, the Panel considers that establishing a more coherent structure for cross-sector skills oversight would help ensure Jersey remains agile and prepared to invest in strategic skill areas at the right time.

The Panel found that submissions consistently pointed to a rapidly evolving labour market in Jersey, shaped by technological change, environmental priorities, and shifting employer expectations. Stakeholders highlighted that gaps have emerged between sector demands and lifelong vocational learning opportunities in Jersey. Stakeholders highlighted that meeting future workforce demand will require a broader and more agile vocational learning offer, one that equips Islanders with both specialised technical expertise and strong transferable skills.

Submissions emphasised significant growth in demand for advanced technical skills across multiple sectors. Jersey Finance noted the increasing influence of digitalisation, artificial intelligence,

¹⁶⁸ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 07 January 2026](#), p.17

¹⁶⁹ [Transcript, Public Hearing with the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Witness the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 08 January 2026](#)

automation, and sustainability on the global financial services industry. Submissions suggested that these changes were leading to rising requirements for digital literacy, data analysis capabilities, compliance expertise, and other advanced professional skills. The Panel also learned that the transition to a low-carbon economy was generating new technical training needs, particularly in low-carbon heating systems, heat pump installation, and wider renewable energy technologies, an issue raised by the Jersey Construction Council. In addition, industry-specific submissions, such as those from Toni & Guy, highlighted the continuing need for specialised technical skills in sectors like hairdressing, where evolving client expectations and professional standards require ongoing upskilling and advanced practical training. Collectively, these submissions indicate that technical skillsets must continue to expand and modernise to keep pace with economic and regulatory developments.

Alongside technical expertise, the Panel found that employers across sectors continue to place increasing emphasis on soft and transferable skills. Submissions from Jersey Finance stressed growing gaps in areas such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, and critical thinking, skills that are becoming more important as workplaces automate. Stakeholders also identified persistent challenges relating to work readiness among school leavers, with employers reporting inconsistent levels of employability skills, such as reliability, professional behaviour, and adaptability. Evidence from JICAS further underscored the need to strengthen broad, cross-sector transferable skills, arguing that current vocational learning pathways place too much focus on narrow technical competencies. The Panel found that these submissions collectively highlight the importance of embedding core competencies and transferrable skills across all lifelong learning provision to ensure learners can adapt to changing roles and sectoral demands.

Evidence also pointed to limited agility within training provision, with providers reporting difficulties in responding quickly to rapidly evolving sectors such as digital technology and low-carbon industries. Highlands College further emphasised that longstanding under-investment in vocational education infrastructure constrains its ability to remain responsive at scale. For example, Highlands College stated:

“without statutory funding and infrastructure investment, we cannot sustain responsiveness. International best practice (e.g., Norway, Germany) values vocational learning highly, it has the same status as studying medicine and is seen as an equal and valued pathway alternative to A-Levels. It must be recognised that Germany for example, has a fully progressive taxation system, starting at 14% and rising to 45%. Thus, the ability to invest in education and training is greater. Significant investment and an agreed entitlement for vocational education are essential to deliver government ambitions and economic growth.”¹⁷⁰

Alongside these systemic issues, submissions identified notable accessibility and inclusion gaps. NEON Salon and School stressed that career changers and adults seeking to reskill face too few flexible pathways. The submission from U3A Jersey argued that older adults, although increasingly engaged in digital learning, continue to experience challenges around digital confidence and concerns, in particular about online fraud¹⁷¹. Autism Jersey also highlighted the lack of structured vocational pathways for neurodivergent individuals, with employment aspirations rarely incorporated into support planning.¹⁷² Together, these findings indicate that while there is commitment across the system, significant gaps remain in strategic coordination, investment, and inclusive access to lifelong learning.

¹⁷⁰ [Written Submission, Highlands College and University College Jersey](#), 14 January 2026

¹⁷¹ [Written Submission – Jersey u3a](#), 22 December 2025

¹⁷² [Written Submission – Autism Jersey](#), 30 December 2025

3.4 Skills Priorities for the Future

The Panel found that submissions highlighted three overarching priorities for future skills development in Jersey. First, there was strong support for embedding digital resilience including adaptability to AI. For example, the submission from Jersey Finance highlighted the demand: “rapidly evolving areas such as digital technologies, AI, sustainability, and advanced professional skills reveal clear gaps in training provision.” Similarly, U3A highlighted that older adults “want to enhance their digital skills training”, which highlights the significant demand for upskilling and reskilling for advancements in technology.¹⁷³

In their submission, Highlands College echoed these concerns and pointed to evidence from the PwC *Upskilling Jersey* report (2019), which forecast that 30% of jobs were at risk due to automation, including 27,000 roles within the finance industry. The College warned that without sustained investment in upskilling and reskilling, Jersey risks undermining both its economic productivity and its long-term social and economic wellbeing. This sentiment was further reinforced in the Panel’s public hearing with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, where the Principal of Highlands College emphasised that automation and AI were already reshaping entry-level roles in the Island’s largest industry:

“We have got A.I. challenges, which... are already having an impact on entry level jobs in finance, our biggest employer. We would be central to any kind of career switching, upskilling, reskilling.”¹⁷⁴

When asked how the College was preparing for these shifts, the Principal highlighted existing collaboration with Skills Jersey through the Skills Fund and participation in all sector boards to ensure alignment with industry needs.¹⁷⁵

The Panel sought to understand what assessment the Government has made of the potential impact of AI on entry-level and administrative roles in Jersey. In its follow-up correspondence, the Panel asked the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning for clarification. The Minister reported:

“Feedback from industry is AI is currently viewed as another tool that supports workers to do their job rather than replacing them entirely. Competence is being developed through use on the job, specific training in AI was not viewed as a priority training need at this time.”¹⁷⁶

However, the Panel found this response notable because it contrasts with evidence provided by stakeholders, such as Highlands College, and with wider research indicating a more significant risk of automation for administrative-based, entry-level roles. In particular, the Panel noted that the PwC report ‘Boosting the Channel Islands Workforce’ (July 2025) highlighted the need to expand and enhance adult upskilling and reskilling provision to respond to emerging labour-market needs, including AI-driven change¹⁷⁷. This research is important to consider in relation to the changing job market, and this accentuates the need for a strong provision of upskilling and reskilling to support those who are at risk. The Panel therefore considers that a more detailed assessment of AI-related labour-market risks is necessary, and that strong, accessible upskilling and reskilling provision will be essential to ensure people from all backgrounds can adapt.

¹⁷³ [Written Submission – Jersey u3a, 22 December 2025](#)

¹⁷⁴ [Transcript, Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Quarterly Hearing, Witness the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 19 November 2025](#), p.21

¹⁷⁵ [Written Submission, Highlands College and University College Jersey](#), 14 January 2026

¹⁷⁶ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 23 January 2026](#), p.5

¹⁷⁷ [Boosting the Channel Islands Workforce](#), PwC, July 2025, p.24

The Panel also asked the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning how the Government intends to equip young people and adult learners with the digital and analytical capabilities required for a labour market in which traditional entry-level roles may diminish. The Minister outlined that CYPES is adopting a long-term, strategic approach centred on the Digital Education Strategy, which commits to embedding digital capability across the entire education system. The Minister explained that the strategy ‘sets out the ambition that every child and young person in Jersey should benefit from consistent digital provision and modern learning tools, ensuring that digital literacy is developed from the earliest stages of education’, and ‘recognises the growing importance of data in every sector’¹⁷⁸. However, while the Panel recognises the importance of enhancing digital skills, it notes that the Minister’s response focuses primarily on digital capability within the education system and does not fully address the broader issue raised; specifically, the need for targeted upskilling and reskilling pathways to support workers who may be displaced as automation reduces the availability of traditional entry-level roles. Evidence from submissions and the public hearings suggests that there are significant demand and support for increased provision of digital skills in Jersey, in order to keep up with rapid changes to the economy. Therefore, the Panel finds that there is an urgent need for a coordinated, long-term digital skills strategy that prioritises upskilling, reskilling, and digital resilience across all age groups and sectors, to ensure Jersey’s workforce remains competitive and adaptable in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

The Panel also asked the Minister what support is available for individuals in entry-level positions who wish to retrain or upskill. The Minister advised that employees in such roles can access a range of support, including free career guidance, skills mentoring, apprenticeship course-fee subsidies (where the course is relevant to their current role), and subsidised short courses through the Skills Development Scheme, again only where the training is deemed relevant to their role¹⁷⁹. While the Panel recognises the value of these initiatives, it noted that the eligibility criteria, particularly the requirement for training to be relevant to an individual’s existing role, may unintentionally limit access for those seeking to retrain or pursue a career change. As a result, individuals in entry-level positions who wish to move into new sectors, or who need to develop skills not immediately linked to their current employment, may find that the available support does not fully meet their needs.

Transferable Skills

Second, stakeholders emphasised the need to strengthen soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, and critical thinking, for both new entrants and existing workers, reflecting employers’ expectations. For example, Jersey Finance emphasised the growing demand for ‘effective communication, problem solving, and critical and/or creative thinking’. Similarly, evidence, including the submission from JICAS, underlined the importance of enhancing transferable skills and critical thinking to improve learner mobility between sectors and resilience in a changing labour market. Highlands College also emphasised structural demographic trends, such as an ageing population, which heighten the urgency of investing in adult learning and upskilling to sustain Jersey’s economic resilience. During the Panel’s hearing with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, the Head of Skills explained that employer feedback consistently identifies communication, confidence and public speaking skills as essential, noting that this had directly informed initiatives such as the Oracy Project: -speaking skills as essential, noting that this had directly informed initiatives such as the Oracy Project:

¹⁷⁸ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 23 January 2026](#), p.4

¹⁷⁹ [Letter from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to the Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, 23 January 2026](#), p.4

“Employers said they would like young people to be able to come out and speak in public. We have responded to that with the Oracy project.”¹⁸⁰

However, in its hearing with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, the Panel heard concerns that soft skills are still not sufficiently embedded in Jersey’s wider skills planning. The Minister observed that skills lists tend to prioritise technical or sector-specific competencies and argued that *“we do not really have enough of a focus on soft skills... they are transferable... and I think that is an area where I would like to see more.”* He further highlighted that soft skills, such as communication, interpersonal capability, empathy, and customer service, are often *“easily overlooked”* despite being repeatedly cited by employers as areas where improvement is needed ¹⁸¹. Additionally, Autism Jersey raised concerns that employment and vocational development are rarely integrated into support planning for autistic adults, resulting in missed opportunities for individuals who may wish to engage in work, volunteering, or training, which points to the need for greater coordination, inclusivity, and flexibility¹⁸². Hence, the evidence indicates there is some good practice in the provision of soft skills training in Jersey, such as the Oracy project, however there is room for improvement and expansion of soft skills training and development in Jersey. Therefore, the evidence highlights a need to strengthen soft skills development across Jersey’s lifelong learning and skills system, ensuring that future workforce planning balances technical proficiency with the interpersonal and behavioural capabilities that employers consistently identify as essential.

The Panel also received evidence from the Jersey Construction Council, which stressed the need for earlier and clearer visibility of government capital projects to enable timely workforce planning and training. Without predictable pipelines of public projects, the sector faces difficulties in assessing future skills needs and in preparing apprenticeships and upskilling programmes at the scale and pace required. The Principal of Highlands also emphasised the need for improved labour market intelligence to support forward planning:

Principal, Highlands College: I would like to see a portal that you could access centrally that looked at future trends. What are the future trends that we can look at as a jurisdiction that we are going to need to meet? We are going to have to start doing it now. There are some things we know. How many nurses are we going to need for the hospital? Who is going to build the hospital? Probably my carpenters, my bricklayers, my plumbers, my electricians.

Deputy H.M. Miles: Are those conversations happening now?

Principal, Highlands College: They are and there is opportunity to develop that.¹⁸³

The Principal pointed to known upcoming pressures, such as workforce requirements for the new hospital, as examples of where more coordinated forecasting would enable Jersey to prepare effectively for future demand in sectors like construction and healthcare. The Panel also heard that these conversations are taking place but that there remains significant opportunity to strengthen systems for identifying and responding to future skills needs. Overall, the evidence presented to the Panel underscores that future skills planning must prioritise digital capability, adaptability, and proactive workforce forecasting. In a similar vein, submissions from Toni and Guy Jersey highlighted that skills shortages are emerging as salons require well-trained professionals, and that the current

¹⁸⁰ [Transcript, Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Quarterly Hearing, Witness the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 19 November 2025](#), p.15

¹⁸¹ [Transcript, Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Quarterly Hearing, Witness the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 19 November 2025](#), p.18

¹⁸² [Written Submission – Autism Jersey, 30 December 2025](#)

¹⁸³ [Transcript, Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Quarterly Hearing, Witness the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 19 November 2025](#), p.21

vocational learning pathways are not sufficiently responsive to the needs of the local labour market. Therefore, the Panel finds that there are significant opportunities to strengthen Jersey's systems for future skills planning.

The Panel noted that a number of stakeholders explicitly identified green skills as a skills gap. In their follow-up letter to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, the Panel asked how lifelong vocational learning will be adapted to prepare the workforce for emerging roles in renewable energy, sustainable construction, and other green sectors. The Minister advised that the first wave of funding from the Skills Development Scheme will establish a pipeline for a future workforce that will support a sustainable economy. The Scheme will offer solar and roofing training, low-carbon heating design and installation, data analysis and data science and historic property management. The Minister commented that the provision of these courses is intended to equip the workforce with the technical skills for a sustainable economy.

While the Panel recognises the value of these initiatives in building technical capability for a greener economy, it emphasises that such measures cannot serve as a fixed or complete solution. Ongoing engagement with stakeholders will be essential to ensure that skills planning remains responsive to evolving technological, environmental and industry needs.

As Professor Dyke highlighted, green skills development must account for both the upskilling of existing trades and the reskilling of workers whose roles may be transformed by new technologies, for example, automotive technicians shifting from combustion engines to hybrid and fully electric vehicles.¹⁸⁴ He further noted the need for agile apprenticeship pathways and a modular, lifelong vocational learning framework that can accommodate future, and often unforeseen, skill requirements, including those relating to artificial intelligence. Professor Dyke argues that 'a framework of modular qualifications' would 'enable workforce development to keep pace with emerging technologies'.¹⁸⁵ The Panel noted that recent shifts within Jersey's local economy, such as the significant and largely unpredictable contraction in the construction sector and the resulting job losses, demonstrate how rapidly labour-market conditions can change. These findings align with wider research, including PwC data showing that 66% of Channel Islands CEOs consider limited access to talent and skills the greatest threat to growth in the coming year, underscoring the need for continuous, future-focused workforce development.¹⁸⁶

These developments highlight the importance of embedding flexibility and adaptability within the Island's lifelong learning system to ensure that individuals can retrain, reskill and transition effectively in response to emerging economic pressures. As Professor Dyke emphasised in his submission, *"planning and responding to future needs of employees, employers and government is central to an apprenticeship system,"* and this requires a comprehensive needs analysis capable of identifying labour-market supply, vocational education capacity and occupational shortages.¹⁸⁷ He further argued that a system of progression pathways and higher-level technical modules would enable "a more agile response to labour market changes."¹⁸⁸ Overall, this evidence highlights the need for a responsive,

¹⁸⁴ [Written Submission, Professor Martin Dyke, 10 January 2026](#)

¹⁸⁵ [Written Submission, Professor Martin Dyke, 10 January 2026](#)

¹⁸⁶ [Channel Islands CEO Survey 2025](#), PwC, March 2025

¹⁸⁷ [Written Submission, Professor Martin Dyke, 10 January 2026](#)

¹⁸⁸ [Written Submission, Professor Martin Dyke, 10 January 2026](#)

forward-looking lifelong vocational learning system that can mitigate the impact of unforeseen sectoral shifts, protect jobs, and support the resilience of Jersey's workforce.

There is substantial evidence that highlights the emerging gaps for future skills development and three overarching priorities for future skills development: AI and digital skills, soft skills and visibility of capital projects for future workforce planning. Therefore, the Panel finds that at present, Jersey's system-wide responsiveness remains inconsistent. Without strategic investment, better forecasting, and improved collaboration, Jersey risks widening skills gaps as sectors evolve. The Panel notes the importance of lifelong learning as a driver of economic resilience and inclusion.

Finding 29: Skills forecasting is limited and inconsistent across sectors. Without a stronger evidence base, policy and commissioning risk lagging market shifts.

Finding 30: The economy's volatility reinforces the need for transferable, adaptable skills. Future-proofing skills will help individuals transition across roles and sectors.

Recommendation 18: The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, Skills Jersey and Statistics Jersey should establish a permanent Labour Market Intelligence function to produce regular skills forecasts and publish accessible insights for learners, providers and employers, issuing an annual island-wide skills report operational by Q3 2026 with the first annual report by Q4 2026.

Recommendation 19: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, should introduce a formal annual Skills Policy review cycle that incorporates Labour Market Intelligence, technological change and employer feedback with the first review completed by Q1 2027 and annually thereafter.

4. Comparison with Best Practice

As part of its review, the Panel sought to examine best practice in lifelong vocational learning in comparable jurisdictions. This work had two main objectives: first, to establish how Jersey currently compares with recognised best-practice models elsewhere; and second, to identify lessons that could inform the Island's future policy direction. In approaching this analysis, the Panel recognised the importance of selecting jurisdictions with characteristics broadly aligned to Jersey's own context. While Jersey maintains strong historic and operational ties to the UK's education and curriculum frameworks, the Panel also noted that comparisons limited solely to large national systems would not fully capture the specific challenges and opportunities faced by smaller island communities.

Through this work, the Panel aimed to ensure that its findings are grounded in realistic, transferable examples of vocational learning policy, rather than abstract global models. The intention was to identify practical, evidence-based strategies that could support Jersey in strengthening its own lifelong vocational education framework in a way that reflects the Island's unique size, workforce composition and economic ambitions.

4.1 International and UK comparators

Throughout the review, many submissions to the Panel drew comparisons between Jersey and the United Kingdom, particularly in relation to how lifelong vocational learning is funded. Highlands College, in its submission, highlighted that while staffing costs in Jersey are funded, the teaching and delivery costs for adult vocational courses are not, meaning employers and individual learners are charged. In their submission, Highlands College contrasted this with arrangements in England, where

adults undertaking Level 3 - 6 qualifications can apply for Advanced Learner Loans, and where adults on lower incomes can access fully funded Level 2 provision through the Adult Skills Fund.¹⁸⁹ Similarly, the College noted that in Scotland, adult training is subsidised through the Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland, with employers paying apprenticeship wages but not the associated training costs.¹⁹⁰

These examples illustrate two important differences between Jersey and comparable UK jurisdictions. First, both England and Scotland provide substantial centralised financial support for adult learners pursuing vocational qualifications, reducing the upfront cost burden on individuals. Second, employers in these jurisdictions are not required to contribute directly to training delivery costs in the same way as Jersey employers often are, which may encourage higher participation in apprenticeships and upskilling programmes.

Additionally, Highlands College noted that government funding rates for apprenticeships are higher in England, supported through the Apprenticeship Levy, a mandatory charge on large employers.¹⁹¹ Highlands College observed that such a model would not be directly transferable to Jersey, where many businesses are small or medium sized enterprises and therefore would not generate sufficient levy income to sustain a comparable system. This comparison nonetheless illustrates that the UK maintains a dedicated and ring-fenced funding mechanism for apprenticeships, something that Jersey currently does not have.

Although these funding models cannot be directly imported into Jersey, they provide useful insight into how small or devolved jurisdictions can structure vocational learning to minimise cost barriers for learners and employers. This comparison also reinforces a consistent theme raised by local stakeholders: that financial barriers remain one of the most significant obstacles to lifelong learning in Jersey, particularly for adults seeking to retrain, upskill or enter emerging technical sectors. Stakeholders frequently emphasised that without accessible financial support mechanisms, many potential learners are effectively excluded from opportunities that could enhance their employability and support Jersey's wider economic priorities.

The Panel therefore notes that international and UK comparators demonstrate a common approach to strengthening lifelong learning participation: reducing the direct financial burden on learners and employers. These findings offer important context for considering how Jersey might refine its own funding framework to improve access, participation and responsiveness to future skills needs.

As noted earlier in this report, Jersey does not currently provide statutory entitlements for post-16 vocational education, in contrast with best-practice approaches in several comparator jurisdictions. In England and Scotland, for example, young people have statutory rights to funded post-16 education and clearly defined entitlement frameworks that underpin access to vocational pathways and apprenticeships. These arrangements provide predictable funding, ensure learners are not excluded on the basis of cost, and give providers the stability needed to plan and deliver modern vocational programmes. By comparison, Jersey's reliance on discretionary funding and the absence of statutory guarantees can limit access and create uncertainty for both learners and institutions. This difference highlights an area where Jersey could align more closely with international best practice to strengthen participation and support a more inclusive and future-oriented lifelong learning system, as recognised by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning during the public hearing.

¹⁸⁹ [Written Submission, Highlands College and University College Jersey](#), 14 January 2026

¹⁹⁰ [Written Submission, Highlands College and University College Jersey](#), 14 January 2026

¹⁹¹ [Written Submission, Highlands College and University College Jersey](#), 14 January 2026

4.2 Case studies of effective lifelong vocational learning systems

Evidence submitted to the Panel highlighted the extent to which other jurisdictions provide models of best practice that differ significantly from Jersey's current approach to lifelong vocational learning. Stakeholders frequently referenced countries such as Germany and Norway, where vocational education holds a high social status, is well-resourced, and is supported by clear statutory entitlements. Highlands College noted that in these countries, vocational learning is regarded as an equally valued pathway alongside academic routes, with qualifications in areas such as engineering or technical trades seen as being on par with studying medicine. This cultural parity is reinforced by robust national funding structures: for example, Germany's fully progressive taxation system, ranging from 14% to 45% enables substantial public investment in education and training. Highlands argued that without statutory funding and modern infrastructure, Jersey cannot achieve the same level of responsiveness or breadth of vocational provision.

Cultural perceptions of vocational learning:

Submissions to the Panel from the Jersey Youth Assembly and Neon Salon and School highlighted that cultural perceptions play a significant role in shaping participation in vocational learning^{192,193}. The Panel learnt that Jersey compares unfavourably to jurisdictions where vocational routes are held in high regard. Stakeholders pointed to countries such as Germany, where vocational education is viewed as having equal status to academic pathways and is widely understood to lead to high-skill, high-value careers. In Germany and similar systems, choosing a vocational route is not seen as a second-tier option but as a respected and prestigious choice embedded within a well-established national framework.

In contrast, evidence presented to the Panel suggests that vocational learning in Jersey continues to be affected by stigma and entrenched cultural attitudes. Highlands College noted that without statutory investment and strong infrastructure, it is difficult to shift public perceptions towards valuing vocational learning as an equal alternative to A-Levels.¹⁹⁴ The Panel also heard concerns from the Jersey Youth Assembly, all of whom described a clear divide between academic and vocational routes, with some young people reporting pressure to choose A-Levels even when a vocational pathway may have been more suitable¹⁹⁵. The Jersey Youth Assembly members also highlighted the persistent reputation that "*if you fail your GCSEs, you go to Highlands*," which they felt discouraged students from considering vocational options earlier.¹⁹⁶ The submissions indicated that this perception is not limited to young people. The submission from NEON Salon and School described longstanding stigma within sectors such as hairdressing, where vocational careers are often viewed as options for those who "*do not achieve at school*."¹⁹⁷ They reported that this stigma undermines recruitment, contributes to skills shortages, and affects long term business sustainability.

This evidence suggests that Jersey's cultural attitudes towards vocational education differ markedly from those in countries recognised for best practice. The Panel considers that addressing this stigma, alongside structural reforms, will be essential if Jersey is to develop a balanced, modern skills system that values and supports both vocational and academic routes, without reinforcing a hierarchy between the two. International comparisons and local insights together highlight two critical lessons. First, jurisdictions regarded as global leaders in vocational education typically combine strong statutory frameworks with sustained public investment, creating stable, accessible pathways that

¹⁹² [Written Submission - Jersey Youth Assembly, 19 January 2026](#)

¹⁹³ [Written Submission – NEON Salon and School, 21 December 2025](#)

¹⁹⁴ [Written Submission, Highlands College and University College Jersey, 14 January 2026](#)

¹⁹⁵ [Written Submission - Jersey Youth Assembly, 19 January 2026](#)

¹⁹⁶ [Written Submission - Jersey Youth Assembly, 19 January 2026](#)

¹⁹⁷ [Written Submission – NEON Salon and School, 21 December 2025](#)

support learners throughout their working lives. Second, successful systems cultivate a positive societal culture around vocational learning, recognising it as a skilled, valuable and respected route rather than a second-tier alternative to academic study.

Professor Boeren's recommendations reinforce the importance of cultural change by emphasising the need for robust, causal evidence demonstrating the long-term benefits of vocational lifelong learning.¹⁹⁸ She advised that systematic tracking of learners over several years by examining outcomes such as employment, earnings, health, wellbeing, and community participation, would help build a stronger public understanding of the real value of vocational learning. Examples such as England's Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) dataset and New Zealand's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) demonstrate how linking education, employment, and social data can reveal how vocational pathways contribute to individuals, employers and society. Such evidence could play an important role in shifting entrenched perceptions in Jersey, informing policy debates about who benefits from vocational learning and how investment should be shared between government, employers and individuals.¹⁹⁹ The Panel considers that strengthening public understanding through clear, compelling evidence, combined with reforms to improve quality, accessibility, and system coordination, will be essential if Jersey is to build a culture that genuinely values vocational learning and supports participation at all stages of life.

4.3 Lessons and models relevant to Jersey

The submissions highlight that Jersey's lifelong learning system must become more agile, better coordinated, and more directly aligned with real-time labour market demands. Jersey Finance notes that rapid technological change, particularly digitalisation, automation and evolving regulatory requirements, is reshaping the skills profile of the finance sector, increasing demand for both technical capabilities (such as digital technologies, AI, sustainability, compliance, data analysis) and soft skills including communication, problem solving and creative thinking. The Panel notes that stakeholders observe that current lifelong learning provision does not yet respond quickly enough to emerging skills needs, leaving gaps in critical areas such as digital literacy, advanced professional competencies and AI-related skills. Sustained government support, especially through funding and clear pathways, is seen as vital to prepare workers for the evolving workplace.

At the same time, international models offer valuable lessons for Jersey. Jersey Finance emphasised the importance of benchmarking against leading international finance centres, pointing to Singapore's SkillsFuture initiative as a strong example of a system designed to align workforce development with national economic needs²⁰⁰. SkillsFuture integrates employer involvement, state funding, portable learning credits and continuous reskilling opportunities, forming a central pillar of Singapore's long-term economic resilience. Stakeholders suggest that a comparable, coordinated approach, where government, employers and training providers share responsibility, could help Jersey maintain competitiveness and develop a future-ready workforce.

Insights from apprenticeship research add further depth to these considerations. Professor Dyke highlighted the risks of apprenticeship systems becoming overly fragmented when driven by complex funding mechanisms, as evidenced in England. When funding is "sliced and diced," apprenticeship provision can shift focus away from the learner and towards competing organisational interests.²⁰¹ Professor Dyke argues that high-quality vocational learning depends on maintaining the traditional

¹⁹⁸ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026

¹⁹⁹ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026

²⁰⁰ [Written Submission – Jersey Finance, 8 January 2026](#)

²⁰¹ [Written Submission, Professor Martin Dyke, 10 January 2026](#)

triadic relationship between government, employers and education providers, while expanding it to place the learner at the centre across their entire career span.²⁰² Ensuring apprenticeships are “expansive”, broad, future-oriented, and designed to develop enduring and transferable capabilities across a learners life, is identified as essential for sustaining employability in a rapidly changing technological landscape.

Furthermore, Professor Dyke emphasised that a balanced policy framework is needed to reconcile differing priorities: government may prioritise long-term needs such as green skills; employers may focus on immediate operational requirements; and employees seek capabilities that ensure mobility and long-term resilience.²⁰³ This underscores the value of systematic occupational needs analysis, modular pathways for continuous upskilling, and simplified funding systems that ensure accountability without overcomplicating provision. For Jersey, adopting an expansive apprenticeship framework and embedding progression routes into higher technical qualifications could help ensure vocational learning remains adaptable and centred on the learner’s long-term development.

A further issue highlighted during the review was the absence of a central, accessible information point for vocational learning opportunities in Jersey. Professor Boeren noted that other jurisdictions have developed effective models for consolidating and signposting training provision, offering useful insights for Jersey.²⁰⁴ For example, the Public Employment Service in Flanders maintains an extensive vocational lifelong learning database containing thousands of courses and allowing users to filter options by learner type, subject area, delivery mode and scheduling. Similarly, in England, the National Careers Service hosts a large course database with detailed information on qualification level, learning method, entry requirements, costs and assessment processes, although apprenticeship listings are managed separately. While these countries operate on a much larger scale than Jersey, Professor Boeren emphasised that their systems demonstrate clear principles for structuring a centralised database and the type of information that should accompany each training entry, offering valuable guidance for developing a more streamlined and user-friendly approach locally.²⁰⁵

Additionally, a central website could enable the tracking of visitors’ search patterns, which could provide real-time data. Beyond these database-led examples, Professor Boeren also drew attention to international practice arising from the European Commission’s Erasmus+ “Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners” (GOAL) project, which trialled ‘one-stop learning shops’ across six small and medium sized countries.²⁰⁶ These centres were designed to help low-skilled adults overcome information barriers by offering free, accessible guidance services staffed by professionals with comprehensive knowledge of local training pathways and funding options. In Slovenia, this model became a permanent part of the national Adult Education Act, with dedicated spaces established within folk high schools and a blend of printed materials, online search tools, and expert support available to all citizens.²⁰⁷ Reflecting on these examples, the Panel considers that a ‘one-stop shop’ model could be highly applicable in Jersey, potentially through an expanded role for Skills Jersey, which could provide a clear, central point of contact for vocational learning information, guidance, and

²⁰² [Written Submission, Professor Martin Dyke, 10 January 2026](#)

²⁰³ [Written Submission, Professor Martin Dyke, 10 January 2026](#)

²⁰⁴ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026

²⁰⁵ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026

²⁰⁶ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026

²⁰⁷ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026

signposting. The Panel believes that a more centralised, streamlined approach to information can increase the accessibility of vocational learning opportunities.

The condition of Jersey's physical learning infrastructure emerged as a significant barrier to the development of lifelong vocational learning, raised consistently by stakeholders and highlighted by the Principal of Highlands College. The Highlands estate was frequently described as outdated and insufficient to support future growth, modern delivery methods, or accessible learning environments. Professor Boeren advised that a comprehensive feasibility study should consider a range of investment scenarios, including options involving government borrowing and potential co-investment from employers or other training providers.²⁰⁸ Such an approach could support the creation of a central vocational lifelong learning hub without displacing high quality provision from private or community-based organisations. She emphasised the importance of designing modern facilities that meet learners' needs, such as incorporating accessible transport links, inclusive architectural features, spaces for informal learning, and sustainable design. While such investment would be substantial, she noted that it is essential for long term viability and learner satisfaction. As an illustrative comparison, Professor Boeren pointed to Malta's MCAST Masterplan, which positions the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology as a central "anchor institution" within a wider ecosystem of public, private and industry partners.²⁰⁹ This integrated model demonstrates how a modern vocational hub can support collaboration across sectors and may provide a valuable case study as Jersey considers the future role of Highlands College within its own lifelong learning landscape.

Submissions to the Review consistently highlighted concerns about the way vocational lifelong learning is funded in Jersey. Stakeholders identified financial barriers as a major obstacle to participation, in particular for adult mid-career learners. Many stakeholders also described the existing funding system as confusing and difficult to navigate. Professor Boeren emphasised the need for a clearer and more coherent funding regime that supports both upskilling and reskilling, recognising that rapidly changing labour market demands require adults to adapt their skills throughout their working lives.²¹⁰ She advised that any future reform should consider the balance between means-tested and flat-fee approaches, ensure clear quality controls, and be informed by evidence comparing different funding scenarios, especially important in a small island context with limited economies of scale. Additional research into employers' and learners' willingness to pay could help avoid 'deadweight loss', where government subsidies inadvertently support those who would have invested anyway. Professor Boeren highlighted several international examples that could inform Jersey's approach, including England's unified apprenticeship funding model, Switzerland's co-funded vocational system that treats apprentices as productive contributors from an early stage, and the European Commission's Skills Guarantee pilot, which prioritises upskilling and reskilling for workers in transitioning industries.²¹¹ She also drew attention to Denmark's digital transformation funding scheme for SMEs, which links business development incentives directly to workforce skills growth. These examples illustrate a range of mechanisms that encourage shared investment, reduce barriers for individuals, and strengthen alignment between skills development and economic priorities, offering valuable considerations for the future design of Jersey's vocational lifelong learning funding system.

²⁰⁸ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026

²⁰⁹ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026

²¹⁰ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026

²¹¹ Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren, 10 February 2026

The Panel found that stakeholders frequently raised concerns about the responsiveness of Jersey's lifelong vocational learning system to changing labour market needs. Many submissions highlighted that current skills planning does not sufficiently reflect emerging industry demands or provide the agility required in a rapidly shifting economy. Professor Boeren recommended strengthening the island's approach to skills forecasting by accelerating the use of real-time labour market intelligence. While forecasting can never offer absolute certainty, she emphasised that analysing online vacancies, search trends from a future centralised training database, and up-to-date economic and labour market statistics would allow government and providers to respond more quickly to new pressures. She identified the value of modern data analytics, such as the use of big data and text-based analysis of employer and citizen feedback and advised that developing a real-time skills dashboard would require strong national leadership and ongoing partnership with employers and training providers. Professor Boeren also highlighted several international examples that could inform Jersey's approach, including CEDEFOP's (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) long-term European Skills Forecast, which combines labour force, economic and demographic data to project qualification demand, and Estonia's OSKA model, which blends quantitative forecasting with qualitative input from sectoral expert panels to guide strategic education planning in a small-country context. These models illustrate how coordinated, forward-looking labour market intelligence can support better alignment between training provision and economic priorities and offer useful learning for strengthening Jersey's future skills strategy.

Throughout the Review, the Panel found strong evidence that Jersey's lifelong vocational learning system is highly fragmented, characterized by a wide range of providers operating without an overarching strategy, clear governance structure or coordinated policy direction. Stakeholders repeatedly described a system that has evolved piecemeal over time, resulting in duplication, inconsistencies, and gaps in provision. Professor Boeren advised that reducing this fragmentation will require stronger system-wide collaboration supported by clear strategic leadership at the macro level. She emphasised the need for well-defined roles and responsibilities across government departments, underpinned by a governance model that encourages horizontal coordination between departments. Her recommendations highlight the importance of involving stakeholders from across the system, government, providers, employers and learners, throughout policy development and evaluation, ensuring transparency, accountability and shared ownership. International frameworks such as the OECD Skills Governance model reinforce these principles, identifying coordinated leadership, stakeholder engagement, integrated data systems and aligned financing arrangements as core building blocks of effective skills ecosystems.

Similarly, UNESCO's Learning Cities concept demonstrates how collaborative, cross-sector governance can create coherent learning environments in smaller jurisdictions. Professor Boeren further highlighted UNESCO's holistic lifelong learning vision, which promotes the use of funding to widen access to education and training for all through inclusive, expansive and community-focused approaches. Examples such as Cork in Ireland, an award-winning UNESCO Learning City, illustrate how such models can stimulate "decent work and entrepreneurship" through collaborative governance and equitable access. As part of this initiative, Cork introduced a lifelong learning festival and established 'learning neighbourhoods' building a culture of lifelong learning across the city.²¹² The Panel considers that this concept is particularly useful for Jersey and could serve as an important steppingstone in efforts to promote a stronger, more positive culture of lifelong learning across the island. Overall, these examples suggest that Jersey would benefit from mapping its current system,

²¹² [UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, Cork, Ireland](#), accessed 13 February 2026

strengthening cross-government coordination, and embedding collaboration with providers and employers to create a more coherent, efficient and future-focused vocational learning ecosystem.

Additionally, a key finding of the Review was the disjointed nature of “lifelong” learning in Jersey, with evidence showing that opportunities and expectations around learning at different life stages are insufficiently connected or strategically planned. While many submissions highlighted the strengths of vocational learning for young people in post compulsory education, particularly at Level 3 and the post16 phase, they also emphasised that adult learners face numerous barriers to engaging in further learning, including patchy, inconsistent provision and limited opportunities beyond the early stages of adulthood. This reinforces the finding that the current system is not truly “lifelong” in practice. Professor Boeren advised that to build a genuinely lifelong and life wide system, Jersey must embed the foundations for continuous learning from early childhood onwards. This includes ensuring strong development of core skills such as literacy, numeracy, problem solving and digital confidence, as well as soft and transferable skills such as adaptability, teamwork and receptiveness to feedback, which are essential in a labour market where individuals will experience multiple career transitions.

Professor Boeren emphasised that a cradle to grave approach enables individuals to accumulate skills over time, supports institutions to nurture confident lifelong learners, and allows employers to invest more effectively in upskilling and reskilling. At the macro level, a strategic lifelong learning model can also reduce later remediation costs, which becomes increasingly important as Jersey’s population ages and career spans lengthen. International examples illustrate the benefits of such approaches: Guernsey’s Adult Skills Strategy prioritises core skills and inclusion as drivers of fairness and opportunity, while Estonia’s Education Strategy 2021 - 2035 advances a comprehensive model that recognises formal, nonformal and informal learning, promotes micro credentials and flexible pathways, and relies on sustained cooperation between government and industry. The Panel finds that these insights underline that strengthening adult learning and embedding a culture of lifelong participation will be essential if Jersey is to develop a coherent, resilient skills ecosystem that supports learners at every stage of life.

Finally, both Jersey Finance and Highlands emphasise the importance of robust labour market intelligence and future skills forecasting. While Highlands engages with employers and analyses sector demand, stakeholders indicate that Jersey needs a more systematic and data-driven approach, similar to those used in other jurisdictions, to identify current and emerging skill gaps and commission training accordingly. This would enable vocational and lifelong learning pathways to keep pace with changes in digital technology, green skills, healthcare, marine sectors and other areas where gaps have already been identified.

Together, these perspectives suggest that Jersey has strong building blocks but requires a more structured, well-funded and learner-centred system to support lifelong learning across all ages and sectors. The lessons from stakeholders point towards an integrated model, balancing government strategy, employer needs, provider capabilities and learner aspirations, which mirrors global best practice while meeting Jersey’s unique economic and demographic requirements. Coordinated signposting, equitable funding, modernised facilities and an agreed entitlement for adult learners are highlighted as foundational components of a more coherent lifelong learning ecosystem.

Finding 31: Learners and employers face comparatively high costs with no statutory entitlements. This reduces participation and makes provider planning more precarious.

Finding 32: Vocational routes remain culturally undervalued relative to academic pathways. Perceptions hinder uptake and recruitment, unlike in countries where vocational education is valued highly.

Finding 33: Provision is not sufficiently aligned to emerging skills (digital, regulatory, sustainability, AI). A coordinated, data-driven labour-market intelligence approach is needed to close widening skills gaps.

Recommendation 20: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should establish statutory entitlements for post-16 and adult vocational learning underpinned by a dedicated, ring-fenced fund and operating the fund to achieve over 10% year-on-year uptake growth in priority sectors, with policy design by Q3 2026 and enactment/launch by Q3 2027.

Conclusion

Across the review, the Panel found significant strengths within Jersey's vocational learning landscape. Highlands College plays a central and dedicated role, apprenticeship completion rates are high, and entry-level pathways are generally well established. There is clear commitment from providers and employers to support skills development and to respond to emerging workforce needs. The Panel notes that stakeholders expressed positive sentiments towards apprentices and frequently highlighted the value they can contribute to a workplace.

However, the review also identified key weaknesses that inhibit the development of a coherent, inclusive and future-ready lifelong vocational learning system. Most notably, the "lifelong" aspect of lifelong vocational learning appears fragmented. While opportunities for young people at Levels 2 and 3 function relatively well, the system offers far fewer accessible options for adults wishing to upskill, retrain or shift careers. The physical state of the Highlands College campus emerged as another critical constraint. Evidence demonstrated that the estate is outdated, insufficiently accessible and unable to accommodate modern, industry-standard training.

The review also found that the provision of vocational learning within the core 14–16 curriculum remains limited and inconsistent across the island's schools. Additionally, the Panel identified a continued perception that vocational pathways are "second best" to academic routes. This contrasts sharply with international best practice, where vocational education is integrated, respected and widely valued as a route into skilled employment. The Panel finds that the divide between academic and vocational learning in Jersey is overly rigid and unhelpful, with vocational routes too often viewed as lower-status and some young people reporting pressure to choose academic pathways even when a vocational route would better suit their needs. The Panel believes that young people should be supported to access a wide mix of academic and vocational experiences that reflect their interests, abilities and aspirations. Promoting cultural change, tackling stigma, and raising the profile of vocational learning as a valuable and respected pathway are therefore essential steps.

The Panel also considers it vital that lifelong learning opportunities are inclusive, accessible and representative of learners of all ages, backgrounds and abilities, ensuring equitable participation across Jersey's education and skills system. Creating a culture of lifelong learning, where continuous skill development is normalised, valued and actively encouraged across all ages, is essential to the Island's future resilience.

Overall, the Panel's findings highlight that Jersey's lifelong vocational learning system is built upon committed providers and pockets of innovation but is constrained by fragmented structures, outdated infrastructure, insufficient funding for adult learners, and a lack of coordinated public information. The system also remains highly exposed to UK qualification reforms, with uncertainty around the future of Level 3 vocational qualifications posing additional risks to learner choice and workforce planning.

The significance of this review lies in its clear and timely message: lifelong vocational learning will be fundamental to Jersey's future economic resilience, social inclusion and workforce sustainability. The Island faces rapid technological change, shifting demographic pressures, growing demand for digital,

green and transferable skills, and ongoing recruitment challenges across multiple sectors. Without strengthened adult pathways, improved visibility of opportunities, investment in modern infrastructure and more coherent system-level planning, Jersey risks widening skills shortages, limiting social mobility and reducing its ability to respond to emerging workforce needs.

The Panel's recommendations therefore aim to support a more accessible, higher-quality and future-focused lifelong vocational learning system, one that supports Islanders at every age and stage of life, aligns with the needs of employers and learners, and enables Jersey to thrive in a changing global landscape.

Appendix 1

Panel membership

The Panel comprised of the following States Members:



Deputy Catherine
Curtis (Chair)



Connétable Mark
Labey (Vice-Chair)



Deputy Helen Miles



Deputy Montfort Tadier
(co-opted to the Panel for
this Review)

Terms of reference

1. To establish the current opportunities for lifelong vocational learning in Jersey, to include consideration of:
 - a. The provision and accessibility of further education;
 - b. The structure, uptake and outcomes of apprenticeship programmes; and
 - c. The role of adult education in supporting career changes and upskilling the local workforce.
2. To examine those opportunities for lifelong vocational learning, including assessment of their effectiveness, accessibility, inclusivity and how they compare to best practice in this area.

Evidence considered

Public Hearings

The Panel held public hearings with the following witnesses during the Review:

- Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, 7 January 2026
- Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, 8 January 2026

The Panel also held a public hearing with Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning on 19 November 2025, prior to the start of the review, which has formed part of the evidence and information used in this report.

Transcripts of the hearings are available [here](#).

Official Correspondence

The Panel wrote to the following Ministers and received responses to written questions from:

- The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning;
- The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development.

Written Submissions

Direct requests for written submissions were sent to a variety of stakeholders. Responses were received from the following:

- Highlands College and University College Jersey
- Jersey Finance
- Jersey Construction Council
- Jersey International Centre of Advanced Studies (JICAS)
- Autism Jersey
- Jersey u3a
- NEON Salon and School
- Toni & Guy Jersey
- Jersey Youth Assembly
- Professor Martin Dyke, University of Southampton

There was a public call for evidence and responses were received from the following:

- The Repair Shop
- 3 submissions from members of the public who asked to be anonymous.

The Panel also received a number of confidential submissions that we did not receive permission to publish.

To view all the submissions and responses to written questions, please visit the review page on the States Assembly website [here](#).

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Review costs

The costs of this review totalled £5,700. This included £4,500 for the Expert Adviser Report and £1,300 for advertising, engagement, and for public hearing transcription costs.

What is Scrutiny?

Scrutiny panels and the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) work on behalf of the States Assembly (Jersey's parliament). Parliamentary Scrutiny examines and investigates the work of the Government, holding ministers to account for their decisions and actions. They do this by reviewing and publishing reports on a number of areas:

- Government policy;
- new laws and changes to existing laws;
- work and expenditure of the Government;
- issues of public importance.

This helps improve government policies, legislation and public services. If changes are suggested, Scrutiny helps to make sure that the changes are fit for purpose and justified. The Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel reviews policy and legislation related to the topics of children, young people, education and home affairs. It focuses mainly on the work of the Minister for Children and Families, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, and the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs. To learn more about the Panel's work please click [here](#).



Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel
Vocational Lifelong Learning Review Jersey

Input provided by Professor Ellen Boeren

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Introduction

The aim of this report is to provide a synthesis of current vocational lifelong learning challenges in Jersey and to interpret such challenges through expert knowledge and understanding on the wider topic of lifelong learning. These insights are then used to present potential suggestions for future research and policy preparation through engagement with examples from elsewhere.

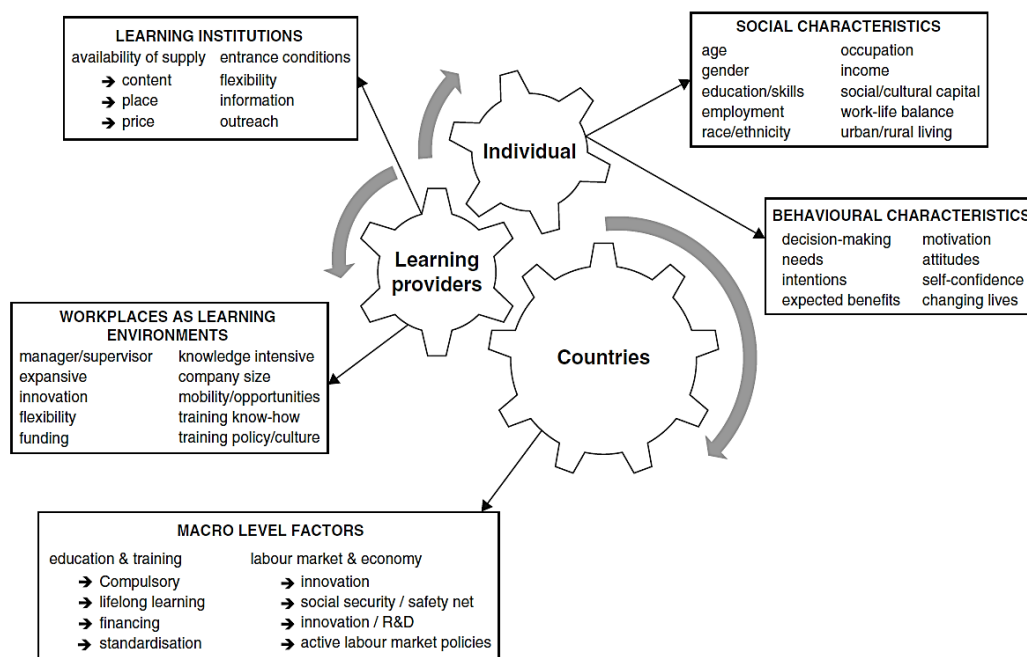
Drawing on Boeren's Comprehensive Lifelong Learning Participation Modelⁱⁱ, the report distinguishes between micro-, meso-, and macro-level characteristics and underlines the need to arrive at an integration of such different layers to build a comprehensive lifelong learning ecosystem. The report investigates evidence from a variety of sources. These include hearings with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and the Minister for Sustainable Development in early January 2026, a summary report on Post-16 Options from the Student Perspectives published in January 2026, a summary report on Apprenticeship Funding from Stakeholders Perspectives published in January 2026, information from the Highlands College Principal on the planned works and capital priorities for the College, and 11 responses to a consultation on the vocational lifelong learning review. Additional evidence was explored through an examination of websites, including Statistics Jersey, Skills Jersey, Highlands College, and other training providers. Press releases offered further information on stakeholders' views with regards to the shortcomings and suggested solutions for vocational lifelong learning on the island.

This report is structured as follows. Firstly, it presents the Comprehensive Lifelong Learning Participation Model as a guiding framework to the evidence review. Secondly, it discusses ongoing challenges as extracted from the available evidence. Instead of providing one generic overview of such challenges, these have been assigned to 'levels' to distinguish its impact on individual learners (micro), education and training providers, including employers (meso), and the role of the government and its decision-makers (macro). Thirdly, the report recommends action for future research and policy reflections to be considered by the lifelong learning review panel.

Towards a Comprehensive Lifelong Learning Participation Modelⁱⁱⁱ

The Comprehensive Lifelong Learning Participation Model understands engagement with learning throughout life as an ecosystem. Countries tend to present their statistics on participation rates in lifelong learning through percentages or headcount numbers. Such data typically refer to learners enrolled in classroom-based courses, apprenticeships, workplace training, workshops and seminars or online training interventions. Traditionally, participation research aimed to understand potential learners' motivation to engage with lifelong learning, taking their attitudes and reasons for engagement as the main drivers. However, during the last 15 to 20 years, we have seen a strong shift towards more integrated approach to explain why individuals do or do not participate. Such models recognise that learners need quality training providers and that the configuration of education and labour market systems can steer the attractiveness of learning for its adult citizens. Figure 1 presents such integrated model, visualising the idea that individuals (micro), learning providers (meso) and countries' governments (macro) simultaneously need to contribute to the functioning of a lifelong learning ecosystem.

Figure 1 Boeren (2016) Comprehensive Lifelong Learning Participation Model.



At the *micro* level, evidence suggests that individuals from the strongest socio-economic backgrounds tend to participate the most. They tend to be highly educated, have highly educated parents, work in skills and knowledge intensive jobs and have strong economic, social and cultural capital. Their past successes have boosted their learning confidence, which helps them to maintain a strong motivation and attitude to continue learning throughout life. While there is considerable variation in participation rates across the world, patterns of inequalities by individual background characteristics tend to be rather universal. Many adults combine work and family life and have multiple time and financial commitments. When learning engagement is not compulsory, individuals must decide whether they expect any benefits arising from their investment in such undertaking. Evidence from large scale surveys suggests that training costs and lack of time remain the strongest barriers preventing participation.

At the *meso* level, societies need strong education and training providers who align their provision with the needs of the learners, and who succeed in lowering barriers to access. Put simply, participation in formal and non-formal education and training can only occur when suitable provision exists. Without such provision, even the most motivated learners might fail to convert their participation intentions into enrolment. Over the years, we have seen a shift from traditional classroom-based courses to flexible and modular provision with tailored intake procedures for those with no or low qualifications. Within the *meso* level, there can be a blend of providers, including public providers such as Colleges and Public Employment Services, and private training companies. Moreover, evidence suggests that most non-formal training is facilitated through the workplace. Employers are therefore central stakeholders at the *meso* level. Here, we distinguish between ‘restrictive’ and ‘expansive’ learning climates. Within a restrictive climate, employers only invest in their employees’ skills development when directly relevant to their job tasks. This is fuelled by budget limitations, time constraints and fear of staff being poached by competitors. Within expansive climates, employers apply a broader skills investment strategy to boost staff morale and well-being, agility, and soft skills. Evidence suggests that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are more likely to operate restrictive learning climates given their smaller staff pool and strain on resources. On the contrary, large businesses are more likely to have their in-house human resource departments with dedicated training specialists.

At the *macro* level, governments hold power to influence the introduction of new policies, governance structures, quality control mechanisms and the financing of the lifelong learning system. Roles and responsibilities at *macro* level are typically distributed between policy domains on education and training, labour market economy, and welfare. Decisions taken at the *macro* level can incentivise (or constrain) the operation of providers at the *meso* level, for example through training grants and loans for providers, or through handing out incentives directly to its citizens in case of bursaries and loans. Their decisions can have a knock-on effect on what types of training providers can realistically offer, often influenced by governments' economic and societal priorities. For example, research suggests that countries who invest in Research and Development see higher engagement with skills development initiatives. It is, however, important to underline that operators at the *macro* level are not entirely independent actors. Their capacity for change is 'bounded' by the structures and outcomes of compulsory education, decisions made by previous governments, external economic and social shocks, and the dominant lifelong learning 'culture' in the country.

Jersey's Vocational Lifelong Learning Challenges

It is worth noting that Jersey has already implemented the core foundations of a lifelong learning ecosystem with the presence of a variety of learning providers and government incentives to stimulate training uptake. However, challenges remain to arrive at a fully operational ecosystem. The following challenges were extracted from the evidence reviewed for the purpose of this report. They are interpreted through 'level' lenses to better understand the impact of challenges for each of the different 'contributors' to the lifelong learning ecosystem.

Individuals - Micro level

- Choice limitations: Jersey's small island environment puts strain on learner choice. As a result, individuals are at risk of failing to fulfil their learning needs. Apart from its contextual setting as a small location, tensions between learner choice and equity arise early in the education cycle, notably between academic versus vocational routes, and between subject choices in state versus fee-paying educational institutions. Such views have been explicitly expressed by learners themselves who would like to profit from a broader mix of opportunities. Stakeholders have commented on the ongoing bias of families towards academic routes as having a higher status compared to vocational ones, influencing choice-making.

Despite sitting outside the remit of the vocational lifelong learning review, Jersey's limited options for tertiary education causes brain drain among its younger citizens. Instead of returning to Jersey upon graduation, many of them choose to pursue careers elsewhere, impacting the demographics of the available island workforce.

- Accessibility concerns: Learner choice can be further limited or delayed by financial constraints, by reduced accessibility because of disabilities/neurodivergence or because potential learners do not (yet) meet entry requirements such as intake qualifications. Evidence suggests that stakeholders at the meso- and macro-level are aware of such individual level constraints. Reskilling routes reduce in attractiveness when they come with financial barriers. It is plausible that mid-career adults are less inclined to take on apprenticeships that reduces their disposable income. This challenge needs to be interpreted through the fact that 'willingness to pay' typically reduces when adults get older given their shorter time horizon on the labour market. As a result, they might generate a narrower Return on Investment compared to starters. Furthermore, adults tend to have other financial commitments to support family life and might therefore be reluctant to take on additional costs. Highlands College recognises that ongoing estate challenges influence accessibility issues for learners with disabilities and that this has a knock-on effect on their learning experiences. In line with the UK's focus, Jersey's school system strongly focuses on the development of foundational competencies in Maths and English. Some stakeholders have explicitly labelled this as an 'obsession' and have questioned the extent to which such approach hinders

individuals' transition into vocational training pathways. Without learners, a lifelong learning ecosystem does not exist. Awareness of accessibility issues as experienced by its citizens provides a good starting point to explore ways to lower such barriers.

- Informational barriers: The island hosts education and training providers within the public and private sector and provides funding support to individuals and employers through subsidies, student finances and business support packages. However, the fragmentation of provision and financial incentives reduces transparency for learners and further complicates their process of choice-making. Evidence suggests that learners themselves want more guidance to make sense of the education and training landscape. The Skills Jersey website offers insight into the 'institutional architecture' of post-16 and post-18 education and training options, including apprenticeship routes, both in terms of providers and provision, and the financial incentives individuals can access. However, it does not seem to represent a comprehensive overview that systematically lists all opportunities across public and private providers. The Highlands College website hosts information on their course provision but is not the sole training provider on the island. Furthermore, evidence from stakeholders suggests confusion among potential learners between L3 and below apprenticeship subsidies versus student financing with means-tested grants. Fragmentation increases the informational barrier, especially for potential learners who need more guidance throughout their choice-making process. Evidence shows stakeholder awareness on the importance of information streamlining and signposting to support learner choice and to enhance accessibility.

Learning Providers - Meso level

- Fragmentation of provision: Public and private providers co-exist on the island. Highlands College is the core operator for vocational lifelong learning but not the sole one. Other providers include Care College as a specialist healthcare training provider. There are Sixth Form Colleges who offer BTEC programmes as well as industry specific training opportunities, for example in road and vehicle safety, offered by 4safety. It is common for post-compulsory education and training systems across the world to host a variety of providers^{iv}. These include formal education institutions, non-formal education and training providers, labour market actors such as employers, Public Employment Services, trade unions, sectoral bodies, and welfare support institutions. Provision can be influenced by both learner demand (micro) and government support (macro). Fragmentation runs the risk to cause informational barriers for learners, variability in quality of training, duplication of costs and efforts, lack of coordinated leadership, ultimately leading to reduced efficiency and effectiveness of the lifelong learning ecosystem to realise the island's ambitions. Put simply, the presence of multiple players presents a choice between competition versus cooperation. Evidence demonstrates stakeholders' awareness about the scattered education and training landscape in Jersey, and some have called for a streamlining of course catalogues as well as an enhanced systems-led partnership model that requires clearly defined leadership responsibilities. References were made to the balance between public and private providers in a lifelong learning ecosystem. This included the need to avoid 'pushing out' private providers who offer quality skills development opportunities and whose training offers can complement Highlands College's provision. Given its small island context, it is unsurprising to hear views on extended collaboration to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of its lifelong learning ecosystem.
- Estate issues: Stakeholders, including its principal, raise ongoing concerns about the Highlands College estate. This disrupts daily delivery of work in terms of accessibility, operational effectiveness and health

and safety concerns. Outdated and dysfunctional estates drive maintenance costs, limit the learning experience, and fail to provide a learning environment that hosts up-to-date training facilities. In a rapidly changing world, training institutions require tools and equipment to maximise the relevance of skills development for the modern labour market. This includes facilities to support the development of skills needed for the green and digital economy, for example laboratories and workplace simulators. Highlands College acknowledges it falls short of meeting the standards required to offer quality relevant industry training. Estate issues also reduce the attractiveness for partners and external users to rent College spaces, effectively reducing the College's revenue stream. Evidence demonstrates ongoing investigation into the feasibility of a new campus estate and upgrading of current facilities.

- Restrictive learning climates in workplaces: Employers in Jersey can access £2,000 Better Business Support Packages to invest in their staff's skills development. They also receive additional financial contributions to support apprentices' vocational competencies. Despite such incentives, evidence from stakeholders suggests that the Jersey labour market features elements of a 'restrictive learning climate'. Employers' reluctance to invest in training is driven by the notion that time spent on mentoring, guidance and supervision takes away from time to complete essential job tasks. Even when training is free, reduced staff time represents an indirect cost to the employer. Public funding support typically does not meet the full costs of apprentice training and therefore asks for an additional commitment from the employer. Evidence from a stakeholder suggests that businesses might fear that their highly skilled employees will eventually be 'bought away' by their competitors. In such scenario, businesses do not capture the full Return on Investment. Lack of clarity on the continuation of support packages for businesses additionally reduces employers' long-term skills planning. Currently, there is no guarantee that the Better Business Support Packages will remain available after 2026. Furthermore, stakeholder evidence acknowledges that 'skills needs' can be fulfilled through targeted migration for shortage occupations, enabling employers to 'buy in' skills from abroad rather than to 'invest' in skills locally. This is possible through work permit policies that allow 'quick fix' solutions to skills matches.

Government – Macro level

- Small island skills tensions: Like other jurisdictions, Jersey is not immune from rapid changes in technology and Artificial Intelligence, the skills required to facilitate the green and digital transition, and the need for soft and transferrable skills. Ageing societies fuel the need for skilled care workers. Stakeholder perspectives acknowledge that Jersey's small island environment makes it difficult to maintain a cost-effective broad curriculum given its work with smaller learner cohorts. Provision therefore requires ongoing partnerships with off-island providers. Similar to other countries, the implementation of new or updated training interventions tends to lag behind skills needed in the labour market. Despite the use of labour market intelligence, some stakeholders expressed concerns about the accuracy of such prediction and the need to act quickly when new demands arise. This creates a tension for the government to balance between 'buying in' skills through migration or 'investment' in skills development locally. While outside the scope of the vocational lifelong learning review, young people's ambitions for higher education continuous to cause brain drain. Evidence suggests many of those leaving for degree level education will not return to Jersey, impacting the demographics of the island's available workforce.
- Academic versus vocational learning culture: Jersey pays close attention to qualification structures and education policies in the rest of the UK and British Isles. Stakeholders acknowledge learners' dominant

exposure to academic routes in compulsory education. They express concerns about the risk of learners underestimating the potential of vocational routes, leading to perceptions that vocational training is less valuable or prestigious than academic pathways. Questions have been raised about the accessibility of vocational lifelong learning routes for those who do not obtain Maths and English credits because of academic prioritisation in earlier years. The labelling of Maths and English as an ‘obsession’ needs further unpacking to ensure adequate understanding on the nature of accumulative skills acquisition that requires solid foundational competencies. Additionally, stakeholder suggests that young people receive insufficient opportunities to develop soft and transferrable skills needed in the labour market as part of the school curriculum. Such debates demonstrate awareness among decision-makers on the role of school level system characteristics in influencing the post-compulsory skills development landscape.

- Data monitoring and labour market intelligence: While forecasting models provide estimates rather than guaranteed outcomes, stakeholders generally recognise that granular data on lifelong learning participation and labour market outcomes can help to support the planning of skills development strategies. Data collected and managed by Statistics Jersey are primarily presented as descriptive statistics although there are signs of scaling up to the use of experimental statistics too. Policymakers recognise the importance of maintaining close relationships with stakeholders such as training providers and the learners themselves as sources of insider knowledge. Regular consultations with them are used to stay informed about their observations, experiences, and needs for change. Stakeholder evidence suggests steps have been taken to triangulate insights from multiple sources such as vacancies and sector consultations. Such approach is important to make future predictions more accurate. They acknowledge that labour market intelligence is not yet fully ‘real time’ which delays the signalling of skills needs. They show awareness of the fact that strong integrated data infrastructures need dedicated leadership and that there is room for improvement in streamlining and linking data sources.
- Lack of a streamlined funding landscape: Policy stakeholders acknowledge that the differentiation between apprenticeship subsidies for L3 and below and student finance for L4 and above creates complexity. Questions are asked about the need for a streamlined funding framework across qualification levels and the extent to which such single system should be statutory. This is an ongoing debate. Current funding arrangements run the risk to lower the attractiveness of reskilling interventions for citizens who already hold degrees. This also applies to those who want to undertake a lower-level apprenticeship that might lead to a reduction in their disposable income arising from a pay cut. Such scenarios raise questions on whether current financial incentives are sufficiently aligned to the island’s skills needs.
Skills funding is also available for employers through the Best Business Support Package. However, this initiative is only available until the end of 2026 with no hard guarantee yet that it will continue afterwards. The Package is also not available to sole traders, raising questions about their opportunities for skills development in case they want to grow their businesses. Stakeholder evidence suggests future funding debates need to include an investigation into the balance between public and private investments, potential advanced partnerships between the public and private sector, and the need for business owners to combine public incentives with their own investments in the skills development of their staff.
- Fragmentation in leadership and governance: As in other jurisdictions across the world, Jersey’s responsibilities for vocational lifelong learning are relevant to policy domains of education and training, economy, labour market and welfare. Policymakers and stakeholders acknowledge the need for enhanced coordination and clarity about leadership and governance for vocational lifelong learning.

Fragmentation runs the risk of duplication of work, parallel conversations, confusion among citizens and providers about provision and funding, communication barriers, ultimately leading to loss of efficiency and effectiveness. Apart from fragmentation between education and training departments, research from the UK suggests that governments' attention to lifelong learning can be constrained by the urgency of policymaking and financing in other policy domains, notably health. Evidence suggests ongoing debates in Jersey on centralisation, coordination, system-led approaches and multi-actor partnerships. Such discussions provide evidence on the need to build a more integrated lifelong learning ecosystem.

Challenges Summary table

MICRO	MESO	MACRO
Limited learner choice	Fragmentation of provision	Skills tensions
Accessibility issues	Estate issues	Academic vs vocational
Informational barriers	Restrictive learning climate	Data monitoring
		Funding landscape
		Leadership and governance

Suggestions for policy formulation and further research

This report section presents a range of suggestions worth exploring to eliminate or soften the challenges outlined above. The importance of each recommendation is argued through for the different 'levels' that form the foundational components of an integrated vocational lifelong learning ecosystem (*micro, meso, macro*). Each suggestion is backed up by several examples from countries elsewhere. These cases are not intended to be copied into the Jersey context but rather present an opportunity to learn from practices and legislations abroad. The potential successful implementation of suggestions will require final resources, time and leadership. The following recommendations can be used as sources of inspiration to develop a roadmap to develop a better integrated vocational lifelong learning ecosystem in Jersey.

- Lower the informational barriers for learners:** Several actions could be undertaken to present information on the available training provision on the island in a streamlined way. This could be done through a comprehensive searchable database that brings together provision from across public and private providers. It could extend the existing Highlands database, merge information from other providers and Skills Jersey, and act as a central 'online lifelong learning' hub. Each training entry in such database could come with course details and information on available financial incentives. This recommendation is a 'low hanging fruit' that could be acted upon within a reasonable amount of time. At the *micro* level, such approach will provide learners with a more structured presentation of what is available to them, helping them to make an informed choice. A searchable database helps providers at the *meso* level to advertise their learning offers. Such platforms enable the tracking of visitors' search patterns which can provide real-time intelligence on citizens' learning needs and interest. Such information can help providers to be strategic in the design or update of training interventions. The streamlining of information requires oversight, leadership and governance. Stakeholders at the *macro* level will have to decide on overall leadership and governance of such central hub to ensure its longevity and relevance over time. An additional action could be to set up 'one stop shops' where potential

learners can consult course brochures and speak to a learning adviser who has specialist knowledge and understanding of the comprehensive lifelong learning offer available on the island. Such approach can facilitate the choice-making of citizens who need guidance and support beyond what is available online.

- **Existing vocational lifelong learning search databases:** The Public Employment Service (PES) in Flanders (Belgium) hosts a comprehensive vocational lifelong learning database^v. As of January 2026, it lists 1780 training interventions. Filters allow website users to search for training targeted at jobseekers, people in work and employers. Each training entry contains information on field of study, mode of instruction, and whether training takes place during or outside normal business hours. Out of the 1780 entries, 781 are organised by the PES while the remaining 999 are organised by other training providers across the public and private sectors. All outside entries need to be authorised by the PES before publication in the database as a matter of quality control. Annually, the PES compiles a list of ‘shortage occupations’ based on labour market intelligence. Out of the 1780 entries, 433 training interventions specifically target in-demand skills for entry in such jobs. A total of 803 courses, including those targeted at shortage occupations, received a ‘recognised by PES’ label, indicating that these are free training opportunities for jobseekers. When successful completion of training leads to an officially recognised credential, this information will be presented too. Each training entry is supplemented by a map that visualises the training location. The database is publicly available, but citizens can also log in by using their electronic id card or citizens’ number. When logged in, users can save training entries by clicking the ‘star’ next to the title of the course. This allows them to build their own training list and revisit it at a later stage.

In England, the National Careers Service hosts a course database^{vi} too. As of January, it lists 103,266 training interventions. Its web lay-out resembles the Flemish training database, allowing potential learners to filter courses by qualification level, course type, learning method and course hours. Each entry contains clear information on entry requirements, costs, and assessment procedures. The National Careers Service database does not integrate apprenticeship options as these are listed in another search database^{vii}. Its website links through to the apprenticeship database which uses a similar layout style with filtering options.

Despite these examples coming from countries with a significant larger population than Jersey, they provide many valuable insights on how to structure such database and what information should be provided for each individual training entry.

- **Project GOAL One Stop Learning Shops^{viii}:** Through its Erasmus+ programme, the European Commission funded the project Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners (GOAL). It took place in six small and medium sized countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Iceland, Lithuania, The Netherlands, and Slovenia) during 2015 – 2018. The aim of the project was to set up guidance services and ‘one stop learning shops’ for low-skilled adults who struggle to overcome informational barriers. The project led to the initiation and evaluation of such services in all the project countries. For example, Slovenia provided dedicated space for learning guidance and support services in their folk high schools, accessible for free for all citizens. The country has now legalised the operation of such services within their national Adult Education Act, ensuring permanent operation. Staff have been trained to ensure they have comprehensive understanding of available training routes in the country, the qualifications they lead to, and the financial support packages attached to them. One stop learning shops can operate according to a ‘tourist information style centre’ that offers printed leaflets, online search options and support by education and training expert staff.

- **Invest in high quality estates and facilities:** High quality modern training infrastructures are essential. It is therefore important to accelerate plans to update the Highlands estate. At the *macro* level,

policymakers should ensure that a feasibility study investigates both the financial and pedagogical aspects of such project. Estates require capital investment but also come with operational costs. Such feasibility study ideally needs to map out scenarios that use public borrowing versus co-investment from employers. *Meso* level providers other than Highlands can inform policymakers on their willingness to share some of the operational costs in lieu of use of estate facilities. Such scenario could potentially build a central vocational lifelong learning hub on the island without the government crowding out private providers in case they offer high quality and relevant skills training. Providers can also advise on the architecture of learning spaces and the facilities needed to provide high quality training interventions. At the *micro* level, up to date facilities can elevate learner satisfaction. It will be important to pay sufficient attention to accessibility issues in terms of transport links, meeting spaces for informal learning between students, and inclusive architectural design for learners with disabilities. It is also expected that estate and infrastructure updates will incorporate climate friendly and sustainable options. An investment of this scale will be expensive and should aim for longevity and financial viability. Despite the costs and time needed to realise such upgrading, actions to implement this recommendation are essential.

- **Malta MCAST Masterplan^{ix}:** Malta, a mediterranean island country with a population of around 550,000, launched a strategic plan 2022 – 2027 with the mission *‘to provide universally accessible vocational and professional education and training with an international dimension, responsive to the needs of the individual and the economy’*. The Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology (MCAST) is Malta’s primary state provider of vocational lifelong learning but is, like Jersey’s Highlands College, not a sole operator on the island. MCAST does have degree awarding accreditation and thus competes with the University of Malta for tertiary education but also extensively collaborates with industry and private training providers. It offers below degree level courses and apprenticeships, part-time training interventions and professional development. The MCAST Masterplan includes 20 smart targets to be reached by 2027, of which the first ST01 is *‘Plan, construct, and operate new buildings for the Institute of for the Creative Arts, the Institute for Community Services, a sports area, an auto hub, a Residential Hall, restructure the Main Hall of the Campus, and the perimeter wall’*. In terms of estates, it has further targets on sustainability and digitalisation, capital expenditure commitments and use of facilities by national organisations and industry. The Masterplan presents seven strategic objectives of which the first one is to *‘Invest in modern infrastructure that is fit for current and future staff and students’*. An estate upgrade is essential for student engagement and to fulfil the ambition to be a College for the Community. MCAST positions itself as an ‘anchor institution’ on Malta that acts as the core vocational lifelong learning hub that facilitates partnerships between education and training, industry and labour market, and government legislation. MCAST could present a valuable case study to explore options for building public-private partnerships and to discuss the role of Highlands College within such integrated lifelong learning ecosystem.
- Develop a funding regime that stimulates upskilling as well as reskilling: Apart from the immediate need to provide clarity on the diversity of funding regimes to lower informational barriers, it is important that any potential future funding reform takes ‘upskilling’ as well as ‘reskilling’ needs into account. Rapidly changing labour markets require new skills profiles and make others less relevant. Adults willing to initiate a career change that requires a different, but ‘in demand’ skills set at an equivalent or lower level than they already hold should ideally not be constrained. Discussions about potential funding reforms, whether on streamlining across levels, means-tested versus flat fee contributions or on issues of statutory right, will most importantly require clarity on quality control and its efficiency and effectiveness in addressing the island’s skills needs. At the *macro* level, it is recommended that

policymakers investigate and compare between potential funding scenarios and make their decision in an evidence-based way. This is especially important in a small island context that does not have the same economy of scale as larger countries can have. Future work could include research on the ‘willingness to pay’ for training among employers at the *meso* level and potential learners at the *micro* level. This is important as government support runs the risk that its financial incentives are mainly taken up by those who would privately invest anyway. Such ‘deadweight loss’ takes resources away that could be spend elsewhere and runs the risk of opportunity hoarding, leading to a Matthew effect in which the strongest businesses and citizens profit exponentially. Furthermore, it would provide insight into different stakeholders’ views on their contribution to the success of an integrated vocational lifelong learning ecosystem. In the short term, an extension of the Better Business Support Package could stimulate employers to plan for skills development investment beyond 2026.

- **England’s apprenticeship funding model^x:** While significantly different in scale, the English case offers useful insight into a more unified funding system across different apprenticeship levels. Contrary to Jersey, it does not diversify between L2/3 subsidies and L4 and above means tested student financing regimes. The English system recognises that not all apprenticeship routes are similarly expensive to organise. For example, sectors of employment differ in terms of equipment needs to undertake job tasks. The system therefore uses 30 funding bands to which apprenticeships are allocated. These currently range from £1,500 to £27,000 per apprentice and represent the maximum that the government will invest. Costs beyond the band maximum are expected to be covered by the employers. Those with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million contribute to an apprenticeship Levy that enables them to access funding for training. Others do not pay such Levy but can still access financial support for apprenticeships through a co-investment model, typically a 5 percent employer contribution to the training costs.
- **OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training Co-Funding Models^{xi}:** The OECD recognises Switzerland as an example of a vocational lifelong learning system that operates through an efficient co-funding model. The federal government’s leadership is supported by professional organisations who design training content and qualification standards and manage sectoral training funds, and by education and training administrations and providers in the cantons close to its local citizens. The OECD VET Reviews stipulate that employers in Switzerland encourage apprentices to actively contribute to profit generating tasks from an early training stage onwards. This is done through the assignment of specific job tasks rather than requiring them to undergo lengthy spells of job shadowing. Apprentices are thus seen as assets rather than a financial burden and this approach accelerates the returns on investment. The OECD VET Reviews also underline the need for collaborative investment models in smaller scale economies and sectors to optimise cost-effectiveness. Switzerland has a population of around 9 million but puts strong emphasis on the role of cantons to ensure country wide rules and regulations are adequately implemented locally. Eight of the 26 Swiss cantons have a population of below 100,000, lower than the Jersey population. While Switzerland has a much longer tradition of an embedded vocational lifelong learning culture built around partnerships, an in-depth exploration on the functioning of such model within a smaller canton could provide useful insights for potential policy learning.
- **Prioritising Upskilling and Reskilling in the European Skills Guarantee^{xii}:** On the 27th of November 2025, the European Commission launched a Skills Guarantee Pilot. It is the Commission’s ambition to set up a Skills Guarantee scheme under its 2028 to 2034 budget. The main aim of the scheme is to tackle skills mismatches and prepare workers and business for new opportunities in strategic industries. It is targeted at workers in declining sectors and businesses in growing sectors to ensure smoother transitions between jobs. To enable this, Europe will invest in adults’ upskilling and reskilling and support growing businesses to fill shortage occupations more

quickly. Skills interventions will mainly take the form of on-the-job-training. This scheme is needed to accelerate the Union's growth and competitiveness and to take pressure of national social security budgets through reducing unemployment benefits. Before rolling out the scheme, the Commission will use EUR 14.5 million of the European Social Fund plus project to run pilot projects to facilitate job transitions in the automotive sector, including business who are part of the automotive supply chain. Each project will receive between EUR 2.5 and 3 million but must co-finance at least 20 percent of the total intervention. The selected projects will run for two years and will provide input into the design of the 2028-2034 Skills Guarantee Scheme. While rolled out at a much larger scale that strongly exceeds the size of Jersey, this new scheme could provide useful insider perspectives on the reservation of budgets that prioritize upskilling and reskilling to address labour market mismatches.

- **Stimulating skills for the future through SMV:Digital Denmark^{xiii}**: The Danish Agency for Digitalization provides funding for startups and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to invest in the digital transformation. Danish branches of international companies with 2 to 249 employees are eligible for these incentives too. Sole traders are excluded together with businesses generating large turnovers (> EUR 50 million). Denmark finances this initiative through European Funds. Companies can apply for funds to test the integration of a robot into the workplace or to receive support from a specialist adviser. Apart from investments in technology, the funding allows companies to accelerate the digital competencies of their workforce. IN GBP, the size of incentives typically ranges between GBP 5k and 15k. This initiative resembles the idea of a Business Support Package but explicitly tailors this towards skills development in areas of rising demand.
- Accelerate real-time labour market monitoring: Skills forecasting is predictive rather than guaranteed. However, data from online vacancies, search patterns from a potential streamlined training database and relevant economic and labour market statistics can support and inform future skills strategies. The need for real-time data allows to act with agility. Common data analysis issues relate to data lags and therefore tend to provide insights on recent and past problems but run the risk to exclude new and imminent challenges. It is recommended to increasingly exploit advancements in data analytics, for example the use of big data. Apart from using statistics, this can include text-based analyses on transcripts from consultations with stakeholders such as employers at the *meso* level and citizens at the *micro* level. Again, a potential decision to build and maintain a real-time data dashboard will require *macro* level leadership and governance and will require ongoing collaboration with training providers, including employers, at the *meso* level. An up and running dashboard will further lower the informational barriers experienced by citizens at the *micro* level.
- **CEDEFOP Skills Forecast^{xiv}**: CEDEFOP, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, leads an ongoing Skills Forecast project and has undertaken labour market projections up to 2035. They use data from the Labour Force Survey and the Annual Macro-Economic database to predict employment opportunities by sector and occupation. They use this information to estimate the demand for education and qualifications and to anticipate the demand for staff replacement in the labour market as well as expansion of sectors. Statistical models include variables on population changes, Gross Domestic Product and assumptions on the needs to cope with the green and digital transformation. CEDEFOP uses streamlined European data but works with national experts to check and validate the forecasts' relevance for the different Member States. Their forecasts are scenario based and thus come with prediction errors, hence the need for ongoing revisions to absorb external economic and social shocks. Skills are operationalised as 'qualifications' rather than directly measures competencies. While CEDEFOP works at a large

European scale, they are at the forefront of skills forecasting innovation and it is therefore recommended to further explore their work.

- **OSKA Skills Development Estonia^{xv}:** OSKA is the acronym for ‘Oskuste arendamise koordinaatsioonisüsteem’, the Estonian labour force and skills forecasting project conducted by their national Qualifications Authority. OSKA aims to arrive at robust labour market predictions to support the strategic planning of education and training providers. Apart from generic forecasts, OSKA additionally conducts sectoral and thematic studies. For example, in May 2025, they published new labour market intelligence on ‘the need for foreign labour until 2035’. Sectoral forecasting models include survey and registry data and are combined with qualitative data from interviews and focus groups with a Sectoral Expert Panel. Each panel consists of 20 to 30 members, half of which are employers or employees, a quarter represents relevant experts from the public sector, and the remaining quarter consists of representatives from education and training. A separate Advisory Panel support the Qualifications Authority in the continuous development of the studies’ methodologies to ensure robust forecasting. The Estonian case is can provide policy learning opportunities on how to develop robust labour market intelligence in a smaller country.
- Produce causal evidence on the benefits and outcomes of vocational lifelong learning: In the wider field of lifelong learning, it is difficult to find robust evidence on the benefits and outcomes of learning. While it is generally assumed that participation in learning generates economic and non-economic benefits, much of this evidence remains descriptive or correlational. As part of data monitoring, it is recommended to ensure longer-term tracking of outcomes beyond immediate course completion. This will require the follow-up of learners at the *micro* level for several years to estimate the long-term benefits. This is important as outcomes of learning might only materialise several years after the completion of a training intervention or – on the contrary – fade away within months. A ‘lock in effect’ arises when citizens decide not to engage with training when it would lower their immediate income, even though the return on benefits are likely to be positive in the longer run. Apart from changes in employment and salaries, benefits can include increased health and wellbeing, and a better sense of belonging to the community. Benefits can be economic and non-economic and return to individuals at the *micro* level, employers and training providers at the *meso* level, and the *macro* level island economy and society. A systematic monitoring of benefits over time could potentially be integrated into skills and labour market intelligence dashboards. Such information can also help to better understand the ‘mechanics’ of a comprehensive lifelong learning model that requires input from across the different levels. Research that produces solid evidence on the volume and share of benefits for individuals, employers, government and potential other stakeholders, such intelligence can be used to accelerate debates on the fair share of investment to be made by each of them.
- **Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO)^{xvi}:** In England, Further Education Colleges and Skills Providers log their learners’ data in Individualised Learner Records (ILRs). ILRs contain information on learners’ demographics, their participation in training interventions, their learning aims and outcomes. LEO is a data linkage project that allows tracking of individuals’ learning records to income and employment data collected by HMRC, and benefits data collected by the Department for Work and Pensions. Apart from ILRs, LEO integrates data from the National Pupil Database and student data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). LEO allows the reconstruction of individuals’ educational histories and to establish causal relationships between qualification routes, employment outcomes and earning potentials. Such causal data allow for more robust approaches to policy evaluation projects. While England’s population is significantly higher than Jersey’s, the data architecture of LEO lends itself for replication across countries and regions

of different sizes. Implementing such system in a smaller jurisdiction will need investigation into its costing commitment.

- **NZ's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI)^{xvii}:** New Zealand hosts a de-identified integrated micro-database that hosts a wide variety of individual databases in the areas of Education and Training, Income and Work, Health, Benefits and Social Services, Justice, Housing, Population characteristics and Community aspects. Data on Education and Training contain details on individuals' participation in initial schooling but also on industry training, targeted skills development interventions and workplace projects. It also feeds in data from adults in New Zealand who participated in OECD's PIAAC competency assessment programme. The wide variety of data allow analysts to investigate causal chains between lifelong learning and wider life domains, including work and health.
- **Reduce fragmentation through collaboration:** An effective and efficient lifelong learning ecosystem that delivers its intended outcomes needs strategic leadership at the *macro* level. Ideally, there should be clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the different government departments, and who will oversee coordination. Governance should be driven by a clear mandate. The core governance structure could be horizontal between departments rather than vertical given the importance of both education and training, and labour market issues. Given its small island scale, Jersey would not need to implement regional and devolved governance structures as is done in larger countries. It is recommended to continue the inclusion of other stakeholder perspectives – from across *macro*, *meso* and *micro* levels – throughout the policy cycle, from the design of new policies to evaluating existing ones. A clear governance structure can enable a collaborative and coordinated approach to suggestions on data monitoring, information and communication on skills development interventions, provision quality control, capital investments and operational costs for estates, and the potential streamlining of financial incentives for citizens and businesses. The continued use of independent advisory boards, scrutiny panels or shadow groups could ensure accountability.
- **OECD Skills Governance Framework^{xviii}:** The OECD has undertaken a suite of projects to advance the efficiency and effectiveness of skills governance in its Member States. Such projects argue that countries need strong skills governance to tackle their ongoing struggles with shortage occupations and skills mismatches. The OECD developed a framework that brings together four necessary building blocks of such governance systems. These are: (1) Promoting coordination, cooperation, and collaboration across the whole of government, (2) Engaging stakeholders throughout the policy cycle, (3) Building integrated information systems, and (4) Aligning and coordinating financing arrangements. The OECD recommends the mapping of the existing skills system as a starting point to design an integrative skills governance approach. This is needed to eliminate duplication of efforts and to strengthen synergies. The involvement of all relevant stakeholders is important to generate trust between them, on top of their required role in building effective and efficient skills systems. They can also support governance through sharing their relevant data for comprehensive evaluations. Active contribution to quality control and progress monitoring is important to build accountability into the skills ecosystem. Finance arrangements can draw on diverse resource streams and co-funding models but require alignment with the country or region's needs and priorities. An in-depth exploration of the OECD framework can be helpful to further review existing strengths and weaknesses of Jersey's skills governance approaches
- **UNESCOs Learning Cities^{xix}:** While OECD's governance framework can be applied to both large and small countries, or devolved regions within larger nation states, the concept of Learning Cities operationalises lifelong learning approaches at a more local education and training ecosystem. A Learning City's aim typically extends beyond its vocational goals. Similarly to OECD, it

encourages a stakeholder-wide collaborative approach with streamlined funding strategies and data monitoring systems for evaluation. In such City, stakeholders are not only consulted by decision-makers but actively co-design learning interventions. They also share data with each other to build an integrative intelligence system to better evaluate the outcomes arising from investments in training interventions. Learning Cities rely on funding sources from different stakeholders but take active approaches to align these maximise the outcomes for the City as well as for its citizens. In line with UNESCO's holistic lifelong learning vision, it encourages the use of funding to accelerate access to education and training for all. Cork^{xx} in Ireland is an award-winning learning city that actively works to stimulate 'decent work and entrepreneurship' through equitable and inclusive approaches.

- Make vocational lifelong learning truly lifelong and lifewide: The foundations for continued engagement with learning after post-compulsory education are built from a young age onwards. In line with international recommendations, the development of basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and problem solving are needed to ensure all citizens can contribute to society and fulfil their own needs. Young people increasingly require a set of soft and transferrable skills given they are unlikely to hold one job for life. This includes receptiveness to feedback, agility and teamworking skills. At the *micro* level, a lifelong 'cradle to grave' approach allows citizens to accumulate skills over time and supports them to use their foundational skills to accelerate upskilling and reskilling. At the *meso* level, formal education and training institutions can actively support the development of lifelong learners and optimise their positive learning experiences. An accumulative lifelong learning culture will allow employers and business at the *meso* level to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their own upskilling and reskilling initiatives to better align the skills sets of their staff with the needs of the company. At the *macro* level, a strategic lifelong learning approach can reduce the costs for training interventions that require to compensate for suboptimal skills levels acquired during the early life stages. In an ageing society, retirement ages are rising. Rapidly changing labour markets require actors at *micro*, *meso* and *macro* levels to rethink investments in professional development beyond early and mid-career stages. It also demands realistic expectations towards the skills levels of the current population to ensure sound decision-making on the provision of second chances and upskilling routes. Such logic also applies to the evaluation of skills needs for incoming migrants.
 - **Adult Skills Strategy Guernsey^{xxi}**: The Guernsey Institute recently launched a new Strategy to boost skills development on the island. It explicitly prioritises 'core skills and inclusion' besides economic resilience and opportunities to build attractive careers. The strategy mentions literacy, numeracy and digital confidence and links proficiency to increased life chances and fairness.
 - **Estonia Education Strategy 2021 – 2035^{xxii}**: Estonia launched a comprehensive education strategy which highlights the need for learning from cradle to grave. It strongly encourages investments in school education but at the same time argues for a stronger recognition of skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning activities. The strategy also advocates for more accessible pathways between different education and training levels and to need to ensure that skills development interventions remain relevant to the needs of the labour market. They suggest a fuller use of micro-credentials and 'bite size' learning opportunities to ensure citizens' skills do not get outdated. The Strategy's Steering Committee consists of civil servants and business representatives from different government departments and economic sectors, enabling cooperation to realise the countries' skills ambitions.

- i [Lifelong Learning Participation in a Changing Policy Context: An Interdisciplinary Theory | Springer Nature Link](#)
- ii A comprehensive overview of the literature on factors at micro, meso and macro level can be found in the book in the endnote above.
- lii [A Modern Guide to Adult Learning Systems](#)
- iv [Opleiding database - VDAB](#)
- v [Find a Course | National Careers Service](#)
- vi [Find an apprenticeship - GOV.UK](#)
- vii [GOAL project resources: cross-country evaluation report, national e...](#)
- viii [Strategic Plan 2022-2027 – MCAST](#)
- ix [Apprenticeship funding - GOV.UK](#)
- x [OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training | OECD](#)
- xi [European Skills Guarantee - Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion](#)
- xii [SMV:Digital - Danish Technological Institute](#)
- xiii [Skills Forecast | CEDEFOP](#)
- xiv [OSKA - OSKA studies - Estonian Qualifications Authority](#)
- xv [Longitudinal Education Outcomes \(LEO\): collection - GOV.UK](#)
- xvi [Integrated Data Infrastructure | Stats NZ](#)
- xvii [Strengthening the Governance of Skills Systems | OECD](#)
- xviii [UNESCO Global Network of Learning cities | Institute for Lifelong Learning](#)
- xix [Cork Learning City - Cork Learning City](#)
- xx Adult Skills Strategy Guernsey [35f06f1f5ea8016c336994fb50379d205fced6b8.pdf](#)
- xxi [Estonia: Education Strategy 2021–2035 | Institute for Lifelong Learning](#)



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