
STATES OF JERSEY



GOVERNMENT PLAN 2023-2026: SCRUTINY REVIEW BY THE CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND HOME AFFAIRS SCRUTINY PANEL (S.R.21/2022): RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

**Presented to the States on 23rd January 2023
by the Minister for Children and Education**

STATES GREFFE

GOVERNMENT PLAN 2023-2026: SCRUTINY REVIEW BY THE CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND HOME AFFAIRS SCRUTINY PANEL (S.R.21/2022): RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

Ministerial Response to:	S.R.21/2022
Ministerial Response required by:	Tuesday 24th January 2023
Review title:	Government Plan 2023-2026: Scrutiny Review
Scrutiny Panel:	Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

INTRODUCTION

I am grateful to the Panel and all stakeholders who contributed to this review of my portfolio within the Government Plan 2023 – 2026. The findings and recommendations are comprehensive and demonstrate the excellent work of the Panel.

FINDINGS

	Findings	Comments
1	At the time of this report, there is not a publicly available list of projects and programmes to be delivered under the heads of expenditure for the Departments of Children, Education, Young People and Skills, Justice and Home Affairs, and the States of Jersey Police, the available breakdown of spend in these departments is detailed in the Service Level Analysis of the Appendix.	More details of the programmes and projects for 2023 will be made available to Panel in due course.
2	£2.215 million is available to the Department of Children, Education, Young People and Skills in 2023 for post Covid-19 requirements. £1.78 million has been budgeted for staff costs and the remainder on cleaning and environmental protections.	This is correct.
3	No funding has been allocated for post Covid-19 costs after 2023. Additional	A business case will be required to be put forward through the government plan process for 2024 to

	Findings	Comments
	funding (whether one off expenditure or recurring) will need to be put forward through the Government Plan process for 2024.	secure further one-off or recurring funding if this is deemed to be required when reviewed at the end of 2022 and early part of 2023.
4	The Government will invest £6.1 million in 2023 to better support schools with resources for the purposes of 'inclusion' for children with needs that are unmet by the current education system. The money will fund new staff roles and Additional Resource Centres in all mainstream primary and secondary schools. The funding is recurring and £6.1 million is proposed for each year of this Government Plan.	<p>This is correct and it should be noted that the figures for 2024 onwards are indicative and may be revised in future Government Plans.</p> <p>To clarify the position on Additional Resource Centres (ARCs), all existing specialist ARCs will be repurposed to create ARCs which can each cater for a wider range of needs (x4 in each of primary and secondary).</p> <p>Additionally, three new nurture ARCs are being developed, two in secondary and one in Primary. We will continue to assess the need for ARCs across the education system.</p> <p>A detailed allocation of the £6.1m investment has been provided.</p>
5	The Education Reform Inclusion Review programme will be overseen by an Inclusion Delivery Board chaired by the Director General of Justice and Home Affairs. The board membership also includes an independent expert in the world of children with special educational needs.	The Minister supports the rigour and independent challenge and expertise that these appointments will provide to this important programme.
6	The Panel has been advised that there are increasing levels of need across a wide spectrum of both mental and physical requirements in children. There are also needs arising because of low levels of prior attainment. Pupil need is calculated using indicators of Pupil Need within the new Jersey Funding Formula for Schools.	Pupil need is assessed by a variety of methods and assessments to ensure that increased funding for higher levels of need is appropriately provided to schools in a fair and transparent manner.
7	It is proposed that existing specialist Additional Resource Centres (ARCs) are to be repurposed in order to provide a wider range of support to students with additional needs. New ARCs will be developed in almost every primary and secondary school.	<p>To clarify the position on Additional Resource Centres (ARCs), all existing specialist ARCs will be repurposed to create ARCs which can each cater for a wider range of needs (x4 in each of primary and secondary).</p> <p>Additionally, three new nurture ARCs are being developed, two in secondary and one in Primary.</p>

	Findings	Comments
		We will continue to assess the need for ARCs across the education system.
8	There will be 117 staff recruited as part of the Inclusion programme. This will include new staff and also some existing staff put on new contracts. There are some concerns about skilled recruitment challenges in educational settings and therefore whether this number of staff is achievable in 2023.	<p>Agree, whilst every effort will be made to successfully achieve our recruitment ambitions, the challenges at this time are significant.</p> <p>We will assess our recruitment objectives and performance throughout the year to respond to market conditions, increased capacity from existing staff, improved retention and strengthened provisions for inclusion. These variables are likely to vary the headline ‘staff recruited’ number and we will be clear about any changes (e.g. improved retention will reduce the recruitment challenge).</p>
9	There will be a process to comprehensively reform Children’s Social Care in Jersey. This is in response to statutory requirements from the Children and Young People’s Law. Whilst the high-level priorities and workstreams have been identified, there is further clarity required on the underlying detail and measurable outcomes for the programme, which is projected to require £6.5 million per year between 2023 and 2026.	Agreed, as the programme is developed, and more detail is defined for the workstreams further clarity will be provided on measurable outcomes.
10	Further review and analysis is required regarding the suitability of the new funding formula used for the ‘Demographics and Needs Assessments’ programme.	Agreed, there is always more we can do to better understand the level and complexity of need across all children in the population. Significant progress is being made with improved assessments for English proficiency and low prior attainment as just two examples.
11	Tutors at the Jersey Music Service (JMS) were offered permanent contracts of employment during 2022, however, that cost was not reflected in the budget for the JMS. The Panel is advised that the provision of this funding will support those roles from 2023 onwards.	Agreed, the regularisation of the contracts of employment is a significant step forward and this must be supported by sufficient funds to cover the increased costs associated with this.
12	The Funding for Social Worker Recruitment and Retention is £1.8	Agreed, although it should be highlighted that the proposed reduction through 2024 – 2026 is

	Findings	Comments
	million in 2023 and this sum reduces annually through the rest of the Government Plan.	dependent not only on more successful recruitment of permanent staff, but also on effective system redesign which can enable better allocation of support through a wider range of provision options.
13	Approval of the School Meals programme will fund the supply of 4,000 meals per day to be provided in the Island's primary schools. Further detail is required on the final business case for the delivery of the programme and confirmation of timescales.	Agreed, during 2023 we will progress this project and gain further clarity on the future model of delivery and timescale for the roll out to schools. It is expected this will be completed in 2024.
14	Free school meals are currently provided to all primary school pupils from income support families, with other children able to get meals at a cost of £2.50 per meal. The Minister confirmed that there were no current plans to change the price for pay-per-users, however, there are calls for the School Meals programme to be extended, so that a free school meal is provided to all pupils, not just those in receipt of income support.	The Minister acknowledges the comments of NASUWT and is aware of the scale of free school meal provision in the UK. At this time efforts are being concentrated on enabling service delivery in all primary schools in the first instance. Any decisions on the expansion of a free school meal service will need further work to identify any capacity issues and of course the quantum of additional funding and where this would come from.
24	The £688,000 of Value for Money Savings target for the Department of Children, Education, Young People and Skills has not been allocated.	Agreed, as previously advised a plan will be developed for the delivery of this savings target,
28	£31.35 million has been removed from the approved capital expenditure for 'Schools Estates'. The projects which had been approved have been moved into new Grouped Heads of Expenditure to help CYPES manage and prioritise the estates projects.	Agreed, the Grouped Head of Expenditure enables funding to be reprioritised or for other priority projects to be accelerated.
29	Amendment 21 to the Proposed Government Plan, lodged by the Council of Ministers, highlights that the 'Land Acquisition' Head of Expenditure will be used to secure sites relating to the use of Gas Place for a new primary school.	Agreed.
30	The 'New School and Educational Developments' Head of Expenditure	Agreed, see finding 28 above.

	Findings	Comments
	has been created to give the Department of Children, Young People, Education and Skills flexibility over various development projects.	
31	The 'Upgrades to CYPES Estates' Head of Expenditure has been created to give the Department of Children, Young People, Education and Skills flexibility over various development projects.	Agreed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
1	The Minister for Children and Education should ensure that suitable plans are made for related Covid-19 costs from 2024 onwards and that this should not squeeze departmental budgets. The Minister should also explore the wider impacts of Covid-19 on Jersey children's education and development to establish whether any further funding will be required to address this in future Government Plans.		Accept	The Minister will ensure that any future Covid-19 related costs are adequately budgeted for, so there is no unintended additional pressure on departmental budgets. The education covid recovery plan is already committed to further reviews on progress, and these will inform the need for any continued investment via this or other appropriate schemes.	30/06/23
2	Details of the membership and terms of reference of the Inclusion Delivery Board, including should be made public.		Accept	The Minister will publish these details on gov.je.	31/03/23
3	The Minister for Children and Education should consult with headteachers during		Accept	The Minister is committed to openness and transparency alongside personal engagement with Head Teachers and other leaders in CYPES. The Minister	31/07/23

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
	2023 about the suitability of the new Jersey Funding Formula for schools and the results of that feedback should be made public.			will ensure that formal feedback from Head Teachers is gathered and published after the end of this academic year.	
4	The Minister for Children and Education should ensure that parents and other stakeholders are specifically consulted on the proposed changes to existing specialist Additional Resource Centres.		Accept	The Minister will ensure that parents and stakeholders are consulted on the proposed changes to the existing Additional Resource Centres.	31/08/23
5	The Minister for Children and Education should publicise the transitional aspects of the Jersey School Funding Formula and share further details about the data used for calculations.		Accept	The Minister will make a further publication in 2023 which will provide up to date clarity as we move through the transition phases to a new formula.	31/07/23
6	The Department of Children, Education, Young People and Skills should require all employees and agency staff to undertake an exit interview at the time they leave the Department or cease working for the Government of Jersey. Staff should have to 'opt out' of the exit interview, rather than 'opt in' and any reasons for opting out should be formally recorded. Information recorded from the exit interview process should be used as a way to		Accept	The Minister agrees that exit interview data is a valid source of constructive feedback which can identify possible changes to further improve staff recruitment and retention. The Minister is also cognisant that many staff, for their own reasons, choose not to complete an exit interview. Careful consideration will be needed to move to an 'opt out' system and the Minister will liaise with SEB and People Services colleagues to see if they can progress this in 2023.	31/12/23

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
	gather constructive feedback and identify possible changes for the future.				
7	The Minister for Children and Education should work with the States Employment Board to create a Jersey supplement for all permanent social workers to bring a parity of pay with temporary agency staff.		Partially Accept	The Minister will continue to work with the States Employment Board (SEB) to explore all options to improve the recruitment and retention of social workers. It would not be appropriate for the Minister to commit to any specific proposal at this time, until proper consideration of all options has taken place alongside the necessary interaction with the SEB.	Not applicable
8	The Minister for Children and Education should consider extending the free school meals programme to all children in mainstream States primary schools in order to remove any stigma attached to means tested meals.		Accept	The Minister will consider extending the free school meals programme, after such time as the roll out to all schools has been completed, and a sufficient period has elapsed to allow an accurate measurement of outcomes.	During 2025
10	The Minister for Children and Education should ensure that future Government Plans provide transparent breakdowns of planned estates projects within Grouped Heads of Expenditure.		Accept	The Minister will endeavour to provide a clearer breakdown of planned estates projects within future Government Plans.	19/09/23
11	The Council of Ministers should confirm the estimated costs for removing contaminated soil from the Gas Place site. This cost should be factored into the acquisition of any land required for the new town primary school.		Accept	The capital feasibility study for this project will include an assessment of all cost associated with the development and purchase of the land.	31/12/23

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
12	The Minister for Children and Education should provide further detail and in the next Government Plan about the prioritisation of the projects in the 'New School and Educational Developments' Head of Expenditure, so that there is public transparency about any changes made by the department to priorities.		Accept	The Minister will endeavour to provide a clearer more details of planned estates projects and their prioritisation within future Government Plans.	19/09/23
13	As part of any school development or redesign project, including those within the 'New School and Educational Developments' Head of Expenditure, the Minister for Children and Education should commit to providing specific space for school libraries and spaces for music teaching.		Accept	Literacy and music tuition are important aspects of a broad and balanced curriculum. As such, the Minister will ensure that any development or redesign of a school will consider the physical resources required to support these aspects of the curriculum.	Ongoing
14	The Minister for Children and Education should provide further detail in the next Government Plan about the prioritisation of the projects in the 'Upgrades		Accept	The Minister will endeavour to provide a clearer more details of planned estates projects and their prioritisation within future Government Plans.	19/09/23

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
	to CYPES Estates' Head of Expenditure, so that there is public transparency about any changes made by the department to priorities.				

CONCLUSION

I am pleased to accept the vast majority of the Panel's recommendations which are well evidenced and will further improve our delivery and responsiveness to Islanders.