

Minister for Children  
and Education

19-21 Broad Street | St Helier  
Jersey | JE2 3RR



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

**BY EMAIL**

23 January 2023

Dear Chair,

**Further Education and Skills Actionable Agenda**

Thank you for your letter of 17<sup>th</sup> January requesting information on the above subject. Please see the below responses which I trust provide all the information you need, but please do not hesitate to contact me again if you need anything further.

**1. The Panel notes the absence of references to training and transferable skills for essential workers such as teachers, nurses, doctors, emergency services workers and care workers in the Agenda. What consideration has been given to the prioritisation of training and transferable skills in these core sectors?**

The Actionable Agenda represents a strategic approach to developing Jersey's FE and Skills provision as a whole, so rightly does not include sector or profession-specific recommendations. However, the establishment of a Jersey Skills Fund (action 7) will provide a framework to ensure that all workers can access appropriate training and re-skilling opportunities, based on improved labour market information to understand the evolving dynamics of supply and demand.

**2. Will an increase to the age of participation up to 18 years, for 16-19 Technical Education, also provide flexibility and choice for participants, such as work in the charity sector for example?**

Yes. It is likely that participation will have a broad definition to ensure a wide choice of options for all Islanders. What is important is that we minimise the numbers of those not in education, employment or training, not what they choose to do. I can certainly see no barriers to work in the charitable sector meeting the requirements of participation, as long as there is an element of appropriate training taking place. You will of course understand that the specifics are yet to be developed, but in principle, the most important factor is participation and to do that we must not limit young people's choices.

**3. Please could you advise whether the Student Finance department has adequate staff resources and whether any processes used by Student Finance have been digitised?**

The Student Finance team currently have challenges around staffing due to two members of the team being on parental leave – one due back in February and the other in September. While they have been backfilled, the colleagues are still learning. CYPES are currently reviewing the request for one additional permanent Advisor to minimise the need for Back to Work to long-term supplement the resource. Regardless, there are additional Advisors with access to the database to help in peak times.

There have been considerable improvements in recent months to the customer experience of applying for Student Finance;

- HE2 (Income form) now an online form and the document portal has been launched so that customers no longer need to email additional attachments. This eliminates the risk of attachments being blocked or misfiled. For each upload, the customer receives a receipt.
- The SF team now assess business accounts rather than waiting for an accountant, thereby minimising the time taken to assess.
- Customers are now emailed rather than letters being sent in the post.
- All customer telephone calls are monitored and stats recorded.
- Facebook page launched for live updates direct to customers.
- Additional payment run agreed with Treasury – now twice weekly, to minimise the payment time to students.

**4. Has the funding allocated to Student Finance grants been linked to the Retail Price Index?**

The funding allocated to Student Finance will be moving to Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) later this year and part of this work will be to define and agree a suitable mechanism to base annual adjustments on. The Panel may wish to note that the additional maintenance payment<sup>1</sup> made to eligible students in December 2022 was determined by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) 12 month rate for July 2022, published by the Office for National Statistics.

**5. Please could you confirm how Student Finance ensures that processes for postgraduate course selection criteria are equitable?**

As previously advised the process for postgraduate bursary awards is detailed here:

<https://www.gov.je/working/careers/undergradsrecentgrads/financeinformationstudents/pages/financepostgrads.aspx#anchor-1>

The process for course selection is equitable because there is no preference given to any course subject chosen by applicants.

**6. Please could you provide more information about how the 'Actions' set out in the Agenda will fund and prioritise lifelong learning?**

Action 7 establishes that a Jersey Skills Fund is to be created to enable a systematic approach to be taken in providing funding for skilling, re-skilling and up-skilling Jersey's workforce, to secure a through life approach to learning. As this action is developed further, more information will become available and be shared.

Yours sincerely,



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<sup>1</sup> [Jersey student maintenance payments increased \(gov.je\)](#)