STATES OF JERSEY

PROPOSED BUDGET (GOVERNMENT PLAN) 2026-2029 (P.70/2025): NINETEENTH AMENDMENT (P.70/2025 AMD.(19)) – AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 1st December 2025
by the Council of Ministers
Earliest date for debate: 8th December 2025

STATES GREFFE

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1 PAGE 3, PARAGRAPH (b) viii. –

Delete the words –

“, except that, in Summary Table 5(i), the Head of Expenditure for the Cabinet Office should be reduced by £250,000 and the Head of Expenditure for Education and Lifelong Learning should be increased by £250,000 to allocate funds to a pilot scheme intended to extend free primary school meals to additional households, with any consequential amendments to be reflected as necessary throughout the Budget.”

2 PAGE 4, PARAGRAPH (b) xii. –

Delete the words –

“The Budget allocates funds from the Chief Minister’s funding for pilot schemes, to a pilot scheme intended to extend free primary school meals to additional households, including, but not limited to, single-parent families and, if feasible, households that would otherwise qualify for Income Support were they not owner-occupiers of a mortgaged residence.”

3 PAGE 4, PARAGRAPH (b) xii. –

Substitute the words “also utilise the additional data provided by the pilot scheme” with “collect, collate and analyse the necessary data” and before the word “provision” insert “extending the” and after the words “primary schools,” insert “ and additional households, including, but not limited to, single-parent families and, if feasible, households that would otherwise qualify for Income Support were they not owner-occupiers of a mortgaged residence”

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Note: After this amendment, the amendment would read as follows –

1 PAGE 4, PARAGRAPH (b) xii. –

“to approve, in accordance with Article 9(1) of the Law, the Government Plan 2026-2029, as set in the Appendix to the accompanying Report, except that on page 45, after the words “to all 2–3-year-olds”, there should be inserted a new paragraph as follows –

During 2026 the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning will collect, collate and analyse the necessary data to explore the feasibility of extending the provision of free school meals to all non-fee-paying primary schools and additional households, including, but not limited to, single-parent families and, if feasible, households that would otherwise qualify for Income Support were they not owner-occupiers of a mortgaged residence, reporting to the Assembly prior to the end of 2026.".

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

(a) In accordance with Article 16 of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019 (the Law) to approve an amendment to the Government Plan 2025 – 2028 (entitled "Budget 2025 – 2028") to a reduction in the 2025 head of expenditure "Grants to States Funds" as included in Table 5(i) Revenue Heads of Expenditure of that Government Plan from £119,821,000 to £69,821,000.

(b) To receive the Government Plan 2026 – 2029 (entitled "Budget 2026-2029") specified in Article 9(1) of the Law and specifically –

i. to approve the estimate of total States income to be paid into the Consolidated Fund in 2026 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 1 to the Report, which is inclusive of the proposed taxation and impôts duties changes outlined in the Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(a) of the Law.

ii. to refer to their Act dated 24th June 2003 in which they approved that no new 'user pays' charges be introduced without any such charge receiving prior in principle approval by the States Assembly and accordingly to approve the introduction of two new charges, to be levied by Health and Care Jersey to promote appropriate use of the Emergency Department and for repeated non-attendance of outpatient appointments, detailed in the section entitled "Departmental Income Sources" as set out in the Appendix to the accompanying Report.

iii. to approve the proposed Changes to Approval for financing/borrowing for 2026, as shown in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 2 to the Report, which may be obtained by the Minister for Treasury and Resources, as and when required, in line with Article 9 (2)(c) of the Law, of up to those revised approval amounts.

iv. to approve the transfers from one States fund to another for 2026 of up to and including the amounts set in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 3 in line with Article 9(2)(b) of the Law.

v. to approve a transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Stabilisation Fund in 2026 of up to £50 million, subject to a decision of the Minister for Treasury and Resources based on the availability of funds in the Consolidated Fund as at 31st December 2025 in excess of the estimates provided in this plan, or from budgeted underspends identified before 31st December 2026.

vi. to approve a transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Agricultural Loans Fund in 2026 of up to £5 million, subject to a decision of the Minister for Treasury and Resources based on availability of funds in the Consolidated Fund as at 31st December 2025 in excess of estimates provided in this plan, or from budgeted underspends identified before 31st December 2026;

vii. to approve each major project that is to be started or continued in 2026 and the total cost of each such project and any amendments to the proposed total cost of a major project under a previously approved Government Plan, in line with Article 9(2)(d), (e) and (f) of the Law and as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 4 to the Report.

viii. to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund for 2026, for each head of expenditure, being gross expenditure less estimated income (if any), in line with Articles 9(2)(g), 10(1) and 10(2) of the Law, and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Tables 5(i) and (ii) of the Report.

ix. to approve the estimated income, being estimated gross income less expenditure, that each States trading operation will pay into its trading fund in 2026 in line with Article 9(2)(h) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 6 to the Report.

x. to approve the proposed amount to be appropriated from each States trading operation's trading fund for 2026 for each head of expenditure in line with Article 9(2)(i) of the Law and set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 7 to the Report.

xi. to approve the estimated income and expenditure proposals for the Climate Emergency Fund for 2026 as set out in Appendix 2 – Summary Table 8 to the Report.

xii. to approve, in accordance with Article 9(1) of the Law, the Government Plan 2026-2029, as set in the Appendix to the accompanying Report, except that on page 45, after the words "to all 2–3-year-olds", there should be inserted a new paragraph as follows –

"During 2026 the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning will collect, collate and analyse the necessary data to explore the feasibility of provision of free school meals to all non-fee-paying primary schools and additional households, including, but not limited to, single-parent families and, if feasible, households that would otherwise qualify for Income Support were they not owner-occupiers of a mortgaged residence, reporting to the Assembly prior to the end of 2026.".

REPORT

The Council of Ministers are committed to ensuring that children have access to nutritious meals during the school day supporting children's health, well-being and learning.

School meals contribute significantly to daily dietary intake and are associated with improved concentration, reduced absenteeism and better educational outcomes. Universal availability also helps reduce inequalities by ensuring that children from low-income households receive consistent nutrition.

An amendment to the amendment is sought to enable the pilot programme to conclude and be fully evaluated before any further changes are made. Changing criteria at this stage will alter the methodology of the pilot programme and will impact on the evaluation of the current criteria.

Overview of current Free School Meal (FSM) Provision

FSM eligibility in Jersey is determined through the following criteria:

• Children who are, or have previously been, Children Looked After
• Children from households that have recently claimed Income Support
• Children from Registered-status households who would qualify for Income Support if the five-year residency requirement did not apply
• Children approved for support under exceptional circumstances

These criteria ensure that children with the highest levels of financial vulnerability are prioritised.

Head Teacher Discretion

Head teachers can allocate FSM in exceptional circumstances where they believe a child is in need but does not meet the formal Income Support threshold. Schools report that this mechanism is one of the most effective tools for ensuring children do not miss out on meals due to technical or short-term eligibility barriers.

Examples include:

• single-income households
• families with mortgages who do not qualify for Income Support
• households in shared equity or first-time buyer schemes
• families participating in Andium repurchase arrangements
• children experiencing short-term financial or welfare-related instability
• cases where a parent is chronically ill or otherwise unable to provide adequately

Schools describe discretion-based FSM allocation as a vital support mechanism that allows them to respond quickly and sensitively to need. They also note that this enhances their role as accessible support hubs for families.

Recent data demonstrates that schools are utilising discretion and particularly in those schools with increased need with 191 children currently falling into this category.

The pilot evaluation will take into consideration the providers difference in delivery mechanisms.

A key benefit of the current pilot model is that neither pupils nor staff can identify who is receiving FSM.

As part of the pilot evaluation engagement with school leaders, pupils and parents will be undertaken which provides opportunity to directly engage with families and discuss the FSM criteria and potential barriers to access. This information will inform the procurement strategy and delivery model from September 2026.

Free School Meals in Secondary Schools

A pilot meal service is in place at Haute Vallée School to test the feasibility of expanding hot meal provision into the secondary phase. As of last week's reporting, 243 pupils were registered for the service. Of these, 205 pupils accessed at least one meal during the week, representing 84 percent of registered pupils. One hundred and twelve pupils accessed meals on all five days, representing 46 percent of registered users.
These figures indicate strong engagement, with a high proportion of pupils trying the service and a substantial number using it consistently throughout the week. School feedback suggests that convenience, predictability and familiarity of menu options are key drivers of uptake. As with the primary pilot, flexibility in ordering and clear communication are important for sustained participation.
The secondary pilot is being formally reviewed in January, with a view to planning a phased rollout across additional sites during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2026. This review will consider kitchen capacity, staffing requirements, menu suitability and alignment with the broader primary school meals programme. The findings will help determine the operational and financial implications of extending the service to all Government secondary schools.

Financial and staffing implications

To provide the financial implication of targeting the two areas specified within the amendment (single parent families or households that would otherwise be in receipt of income support if not owner-occupiers of a mortgaged residence), we would need to have access to data and this is not currently held by Government of Jersey. Such data is required to understand the number of children this would include alongside quantifying those already paying for school meals and those that would be transitioning from pre-prepared lunchboxes before the financial impact can be fully calculated.

Whilst not anticipated, should the changes result in significant increased uptake, additional catering staff may be required to support delivery within schools. The current staffing model is based on one catering assistant providing approximately 80 meals during each service period, while accommodating the operational and logistical requirements specific to each site. All sites are built to deliver 80% of school pupil numbers in terms of equipment and storage.

As the expected uptake is unknown, following the review of feasibility these detailed costings can be put together.

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

The Council of Ministers consider that this proposition (amendment) has no direct or indirect impact on children and that the duty to have due regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child does not arise. Accordingly, a Children's Rights Impact Assessment is not required under the Children (Conventions Rights) (Jersey) Law 2022.